



Balnamore Primary School

Return to School Policy August 2020

Rationale

This policy exists as a result of need to implement a plan for return to school after a period of school closure from 20th March 2020 due to Coronavirus pandemic.

Aims

To advise Staff, Parents and Pupils on a manageable recovery plan for school return in August 2020.

To provide guidance relating to the actions that encourage continuity of learning for every child. It provides a common reference point for school governors, leaders and staff as they prepare for the 'new normal'.

To advise on health and safety guidelines for all members of the school community

This policy/ recovery plan has been created in agreement with guidance provided by ***Department of Education Circular 2020/ 05 Guidance for Schools on Supporting Remote Learning To Provide Educational Continuity.***

The policy also takes into account guidance on ***'Supporting Learning; The Continuity of Learning Project'*** as well as the ***Education Restart Programme.***

To read the '**Coronavirus Northern Ireland Re-Opening of School Guidance**' please use the link

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-re-opening-school-guidance-new-school-day>

Please be aware this policy is stipulating guidelines. Social distancing is a legal requirement and is in contradiction to our inclusive, pastoral ethos. While we aim to ALWAYS put the needs of our child first with a nurturing approach, we ask parents to be patient and understanding for this, hopefully, short period of time. Staff are committed to meeting the needs of the children.

Please read this policy alongside all other existing school policies e.g. Pastoral Care, Safeguarding, SEN and Inclusion which will be available to view upon request.

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has necessitated school leaders, staff and governors to work in ways which differ greatly from what we know and understand as normal practice. Fundamentally, this has meant implementing a new routine of remote/online learning and teaching and engaging educationally with learners in a wide variety of different ways. Balnamore Primary School adapted quickly to the Minister of Education's decision to close schools as a result of the coronavirus in NI, whilst continuing to teach our pupils in the classroom setting in the period prior to lockdown we prepared written materials for all pupils, at their individual learning level. We initially provided materials for the period up to Easter and then supplemented this with materials from Easter through to summer . We also made provision for remote learning posting online learning materials on the school website as well as directing pupils to further online learning sites to enhance their educational experience while at home. We also offered provision for the children of Key Workers and vulnerable children.

Our primary method of maintaining contact with parents was through the use of the Teacher to Parent App and the school website. These methods were already well established in school, and parents engage well with messages sent through this medium.

As we look to the restart we are aiming to have all children back to school on a full time basis however we will examine the possibility of using the website to post homework tasks. Foundation Stage also intent to implement the use of SeeSaw as a means of communicating with parents.

The underpinning principle is that all pupils will have access to high quality learning and teaching opportunities both in school and at home.

Practical Arrangements (for the 'new' school day)

Government guidelines suggest that children should return to school, adhering to 1m social distancing for children, were possible, and 2m for adults. While NI schools can learn from the wider international community where children have already returned to school, there are still many unknowns and indeed we are aware this could change over the next number of weeks. As a result, we have had to face the huge responsibility of designing and developing a school system that will help reduce potential viral transfer amongst children. Schools are being asked to implement systems and structures that seek to reduce each child's number of close physical contacts as far as possible. It is widely acknowledged that social distancing in the early years of primary school will be extremely difficult. During the school day children may become upset or need reassurance from staff and this should be given by staff comforting the children.

Our model will be based on the 1m (between children) – 2m (adults) social distancing guidelines which will help to reduce each child's close physical contacts to a minimum. We will also ensure that the same groupings exist as much as possible with the same adults.

As far as possible, groups of children will be supported by consistent staffing, and groups will remain as consistent as possible. Each class will be in their own protective bubble in their own classroom area. Classrooms have been rearranged to support social distancing recommendations, continuity as well as safety. Each class will have their break/ lunch time and playtime separately unless PHA/government guidance allows for this to change.

In practice we understand that there are times when other staff members may need to provide cover for children from another cohort. However, this should be for limited periods and physical distancing must be maintained between adults. Staff should ensure strict hygiene practices are carried out if they are caring for different groups.

School Day

The school day will start off as a shorter day for all children to allow time to adapt. P7 children will attend school from 24th August. The remainder of pupils will return on Tuesday 1st September. Drop off and collection times have been staggered and a number of different entrances and gates across the school premises have been used to ensure maximum social distance between both pupils and parents.

Children may be dropped off in the morning at the times agreed for each class. All pupils should be dropped off and come in via the entrance assigned to their class where their teacher will be waiting for them. Parents should not enter the school. Again, for social distancing measures, there should be NO children playing in playground in the morning. Parents are encouraged to drop off and pick up promptly.

The only exception will be P1 parents with pupils who are new to the school. They are to meet Miss Martin in the playground. Where parents are dropping off young children and it is not possible to maintain physical distancing between adults, staff and children should wash hands after the child is safely in the setting. We will ensure both the child and the parent is comfortable in the handover and make any necessary arrangements if a child is distressed for the parent to comfort them without the parent coming into contact with other children or staff indoors.

Staggered Drop Off and Pickup Times

There will be a staggered approach to pick up to adhere to social distancing law and ensure these times are not congested and crowded.

Children may be dropped off in the morning at the pre-arranged time for each class. Punctuality is expected for the school day to run smoothly.

Provision of meals and snacks

It is important for us to continue to ensure that mealtimes are a relaxed and enjoyable time where children can socialise, while implementing practical approaches to prevent the spread and control of infection.

Staff will follow usual good hygiene practices when preparing or serving food or assisting children with packed lunches. Children entitled to Free School Meals will continue to receive them.

Lunchtimes for younger and older pupils will continue to be staggered and children will remain in classrooms to eat packed lunch with thorough cleaning taking place before and after to ensure high levels of hygiene. Children having school meals will go to the canteen in their class bubble with the relevant assistant, the class bubbles will remain separated in the canteen and in the playground, a rota for this has been devised. When possible the use of the outdoor environment for dining will be considered.

Other Information

Each child will be provided resources to use in school- these will remain in school. At this stage, children will not require a pencil case or a school bag. They will have their own separate wallet in school to house all their belongings. The only items a child will bring between home and school break/lunch, this will be in disposable wrapping or a wipe clean lunch box.

Children will be encouraged to bring their own water drinkers/ bottles from home as our water fountains in school will not be available.

Uniform

The usual school uniform policy applies. A full school uniform which is a school jumper or cardigan, polo shirt/shirt, tie and grey trousers for boys and grey skirt/pinafore/summer dress and cardigan/jumper for girls with black shoes. While it is encouraged that clean fresh uniform is worn daily, it is not essential.

Homework

Due to the fact that we are encouraged to limit children from bringing items such as bags into school setting and taking items from our school at the end of each day, we plan to set the majority of homework online, via the school website, at this point. We will review this as time progresses. The only exception to this will be P7 children who require preparation for AQE.

We continue to examine the best method of continuing to develop reading skills in all our pupils and will be reviewing this over the coming days.

Normal homework will resume fully when the risk of spreading disease has eased.

Feedback will be regular and designed to keep pupils motivated and enthusiastic about their learning. Feedback will allow pupils to feel their work is being monitored and families feel communication lines are open. Feedback will be specific on what children did well and what and how they may need to develop further.

Monitoring & Evaluating/ Assessment

We are all too aware of the gaps that will exist on pupils return to school. In Balnamore Primary School we will endeavour to minimise lockdown learning gaps as soon as possible.

As children have missed the third term of their last school year, we will be considering what monitoring and assessment of pupils' progress is feasible during Term 1 of the new academic year.

As well as self and peer assessment, on-going teacher assessment will continue, the emphasis will be on levels of engagement and well-being and formative assessment for learning. These methods will help teachers understand how pupils are achieving.

We will focus on the mental health and well being of our pupils as they return to school and this will be paramount as we help our pupils settle and move forward in the 'new normal'.

Teachers will work at this pastoral level to assess the learning and level of all pupils rather than use formal methods of assessment in the first few months of the new school term.

Pastoral Care/ Safeguarding/ SEN

All approaches will be already outlined in the school's Pastoral Care Policy. As we prepare for return to school, we realise the need for increased pastoral support. We realise the context may have resulted in changed or challenging family dynamics.

Some children with additional needs may find it hard to return to school and may require specific support to help them adjust to changes in their school routines and environment. Children returning to school are going to experience a range of emotions. This may include a mixture of excitement, happiness and relief but may also include anxiety, fear and anger.

'Actively involving young people in the planning for their return to school will help to reduce their worries and the emotional impact of the process. Being proactively involved will reignite a sense of belonging and reduce their anxiety. If possible, children should have an opportunity to get involved whilst still at home.'

As a school we have consulted through telephone conversations with our pupils and parents to determine their well-being status and their experiences of remote learning and are planning for the future with their responses in mind.

We will be considering social and emotional well-being, mental health, heightened anxiety, separation/ attachment issues, bereavement and re-adjustment to school challenges that children may face. While a nurturing approach is central to our whole school ethos, this will be prevalent and at the forefront more than ever.

Upon return to school we will use developmentally appropriate language to explain and discuss the new rules for staying safe at school with regard to social distancing and hand hygiene and would appreciate parents reinforcing such messages at home.

Reconnecting with our local support services who are part of the school system is vital at this time. This includes educational psychologists, education welfare officers, children's social services, peripatetic teachers and child mental health teams, and mental health practitioners. These professionals will be delivering services that can support planning for the reopening and respond to requests to develop plans for particular children's needs. We have engaged the services of two mental health programmes which will run side by side to assist both pupils and teachers in the months ahead.

Events such as information evenings, parental interviews etc will be arranged differently to abide by law and information. As we come to terms with the new way of school life, we will become more adept and creative at finding new ways to do things so no one misses out!

Behaviour

Sanctions will be in place (up to and including exclusion) for pupils who wilfully refuse to adhere to the arrangement of social distancing and deliberately cough or spit at pupils or staff, putting them at risk.

Settling-in

In August/September children will require additional time to reintegrate into the new school day. We will ensure our children feel reassured and confident about returning to school. Parents can communicate any worries or anxieties that they or the children have about returning to school via the class teacher, by telephone to the school office and/or by emailing Mrs. Wilson. The school will implement strategies to alleviate such concerns. It is important that relationships are developed and the settling in period reflects the needs of the children. For children with additional needs we will work in partnership with parents, lead professionals, children and young people to establish what support and plans need to be put in place to meet their needs.

Attendance

Pupils Who Are Clinically Vulnerable

All schools are asked to follow the latest guidance on attendance for children and young people who have health conditions or who live with individuals who have health conditions or are pregnant. Current guidance on these categories is published on NI Direct and by PHA.

Clinically vulnerable people are a wider group of people who are distinct from those who are clinically extremely vulnerable (who should rigorously follow shielding measures). People who are clinically vulnerable are those with pre-existing conditions who have been advised to stringently follow the social distancing guidance and remain at home where possible. A small minority of children will fall into this category and parents should follow medical advice if their child is in this category.

Pupils Who Live with Someone Who is Clinically Vulnerable

If a child or young person lives with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable as above), including those who are pregnant, they can attend their education or childcare setting.

Pupils Who Are Shielding (clinically extremely vulnerable people)

This is a different group to those who are clinically vulnerable (as described above). Those who are shielding are clinically extremely vulnerable and require a different set of measures to keep them safe.

Pupils with serious underlying health conditions are strongly advised to follow shielding measures to keep themselves safe and not to attend school in person.

As a school we will provide distance learning and support needs of our pupils who are shielding.

The most up-to-date guidance and list of underlying health conditions that necessitate shielding should be checked on the NI Direct website under the shielding section.

Pupils Who Are Living with Someone Who is Shielding

Pupils who have household members who are clinically extremely vulnerable (at high risk of severe illness and requiring 'shielding') should only attend school if they are able to stringently adhere to social distancing. Such children should have an individual risk assessment conducted before the most appropriate place of care is determined.

Admin

We aim to reduce the amount of permission slips and paperwork to be sent home for completion however any that are required will be sent home. On return to school the paperwork will be quarantined for a 24hr period before being dealt with in school, a similar method will be used with written notes sent into school. Parents will be encouraged to use email

We will still accept cash for school lunches however this should be sent in a clearly labelled envelope with the correct amount inside. Money will be quarantined in school for a 72hr period before being processed.

Visitors to School/ Trips

At present there will be no trips planned, swimming etc. We will keep you informed when these are possible again.

Visitors coming into school will follow current safeguarding guidelines as well as social distancing measures in place.

Where contractors are required to undertake facilities management/repair tasks in an establishment, they must undertake these works in accordance with the latest regulations. If spaces are to be used in different ways from those originally designed/intended and with less/more overall footfall, consideration will be given to the ongoing management of these spaces.

Procedures will be put in place for deliveries to minimise person-to-person contact. Deliveries should be timed to avoid drop off/pick up times, with methods devised to reduce the frequency of deliveries, e.g. ordering larger quantities less often.

After school Activities

More information will follow with regards after school activities. Whenever we have a plan in place for this to operate safely, we will let you know. It is hoped these will recommence in early October and will be attended by class bubbles to avoid mixing between bubbles.

Health and Safety

Our children and staff being happy and well is our top priority.

The information below is taken from ***Guidance to Safe Working in Educational Settings in Northern Ireland*** published by PHA.

Health and Hygiene

1. Upon entry into the building all visitors, staff and pupils will wash their hands/ use sanitiser before break, after break, before and after lunch and before leaving school. This will be clearly signed.
2. We will encourage children not to touch their faces, use a tissue or elbow to cough or sneeze and use bins provided for tissue waste.

3. Establish a regular routine of handwashing (for 20 seconds) and model to children through stories and songs. This will be clearly signed.
4. Have tissues available to catch coughs and sneezes, and immediately bin the tissue in the designated bins provided.
5. All staff should exercise high levels of hygiene/ cough etiquette and present high levels of hygiene daily. High levels of hygiene will also be expected if preparing food/ snacks
6. Use hand sanitiser and regularly clean the children's workstation/ desk and equipment.
7. There will be increased cleaning daily throughout the school day of surfaces, handles, chairs, tables, keyboards, iPads, light switches, toilet areas, telephones, workstations, desks etc (this is outlined in attached schedule for daily cleaning)
8. As much as possible prevent the sharing of food, drink, utensils, equipment and toys. Unnecessary items in classroom will be removed to create extra space as well as decrease the number of items requiring cleaning.

Evacuation procedures

In the event of a fire or any other emergency incident the exit routes remain the same as well as the assembly points. Appropriate physical distancing arrangements will be maintained between individuals/groups as far as practically possible. During these times it may be that children are upset or need reassurance from staff, and this should be given by staff comforting children.

Social Distancing

The steps below are taken directly from **the Guidance published on 18- 19th June 2020 where the social distancing was reduced to 1m for pupils and 2m for adults.** Social distancing measures fall into two broad categories; increasing separation and decreasing interaction and this applies to staff, children and parents. To that end we will implement the following:

1. We ask that parents keep their child/children at home if they are displaying any symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)
2. Social distancing will be implemented in school with posters in place for reminders. Staff will also model to children using stories and songs, games, visual supports and videos etc.
3. There will be staggered lunch and break times.
4. Children will sit apart (1m) where possible and in any case will remain within their own class bubble
5. Limit numbers of children visiting the toilet at any one time, an adult will always accompany children to the toilet entrance to ensure class bubbles do not mix.
6. Social distancing will be considered in all area of schools – entrance hall, staff room, classrooms, cloakrooms etc.
7. As far as possible, groups of children will be supported by consistent staffing, and groups will remain as consistent as possible. Each class will be in their own protective bubble in their own classrooms. Each class will have their break/ lunch time and playtime separately.

8. Staff will maintain 2m distance where possible. Where it is not possible e.g. a member of staff working with a child one-to-one, a risk assessment will be carried out.
9. Parents will be discouraged from gathering at school gates.

Social distancing within primary school setting, especially with very young children will be harder to maintain. Staff will implement the above measures as far as they are able, whilst ensuring our children are safe and well cared for within school. We feel it is important for children to feel secure and receive warmth and physical contact that is appropriate to their needs, in particular when they are receiving personal care, need comforting or reassurance.

As far as possible, children will be supported by consistent staffing, and groups will remain as consistent as possible throughout to reduce spread of infection.

In practice we understand that there are times when other staff members may need to provide cover for children from another cohort. However, this should be for limited periods and physical distancing must be maintained between adults. Staff should ensure strict hygiene practices are carried out if they are caring for different groups.

*Please be reminded this policy is stipulating guidelines and is in contradiction to our inclusive, pastoral ethos. We trust this will be short term and ask parents to be patient and understanding. As the situation evolves, such requirements may be amended or eased and such measures will be eased when it is safe to do so.

If a Child Display Symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19)

If a child displays symptoms of COVID-19 (new continuous cough or fever or loss of taste/smell) or has someone in their household who is displaying symptoms, they should not come into school. We would ask that parents take their child's/children's temperature daily to be vigilant about signs of the virus. . Updates can be found on Public Health Agency website

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

The Department of Health has implemented a contact tracing programme called Test, Trace and Protect designed to control the spread of COVID-19. All pupils are expected to follow the requirements of this programme: to self-isolate if they are identified as close contacts of cases and to obtain a test for COVID-19 if they develop symptoms. All members of their household should follow the appropriate isolation guidance as provided by the Public Health Agency.

Where an individual has had a negative result, it is important to still apply caution. If everyone with symptoms who was tested in their household receives a

negative result, they can return to school providing they are well enough and have not had a temperature for 48 hours.

Where the result is positive, they should follow PHA isolation guidance which currently requires that everyone in your house must stay at home:

- if you develop symptoms of coronavirus you should arrange to have a test as soon as possible, you will need to stay at home for at least 10 days from the onset of your symptoms;
- if you live with someone who has symptoms or has a positive test, you are a close contact and you will need to stay at home for 14 days from the day the first person in the home started having symptoms, it is important that the full 14 days are completed;
- if you develop symptoms during this 14-day period, you will need to arrange to have a test and if your test is positive you must stay at home for 7 days from the onset of your symptoms (regardless of what day you are on in the original 14-day period);
- 7 days after your symptoms started, if your condition has improved and you have not had a temperature during the previous 48 hours you can complete your period of self-isolation. If you still have a high temperature, keep self-isolating until your temperature returns to normal. You do not need to self-isolate if you just have a cough after 7 days, as a cough can last for several weeks after the infection has gone;
- it is likely that people living within a household will infect each other or be infected already. Staying at home for 14 days if you are a close contact or 7 days if you have the infection will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community.

It is essential that all staff and pupils follow this guidance. By doing so staff and pupils will not only protect themselves but they will also limit the spread of the virus to educational settings and the wider population.

Staff or pupils who have been part of the same 'protective bubble' as someone who has/develops symptoms and/or who tests positive for COVID-19, must follow PHA isolation guidance under the Test and Trace and Protect programme. All other contacts in the same 'protective bubble' as a person with symptoms or who tests positive will have to self-isolate for the required 14 day isolation period. They can return to school when they have completed the necessary period of isolation as advised by the Test, Trace and Protect service. This will help contain any potential transmission to those staff/pupils in the bubble and will also assist in protecting the wider community. A 'protective bubble' is effectively an extension of a household. COVID-19: Information for the public

Enhanced cleaning should be carried out within any classroom in which an individual who has developed COVID-19 has been to prevent the spread of the virus and this

should be clearly communicated to staff, parents and pupils to provide assurance that the environment is safe.

If symptoms arise during the school day, the parent will be phoned and advised to follow the guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection. We will keep a full record of actions taken and request that parents sign their acknowledgement of these actions. While awaiting collection, the pupil should be moved to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door. A window should be open for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, move to an area which is 2m away from others. Depending on the age of the child, appropriate adult supervision may be required. The room should be cleaned in accordance to guidance after this.

IT IS VITAL THAT WE HAVE UP TO DATE DATA INFORMATION AND THAT THERE ARE THREE EMERGENCY PERSONS/CONTACT NUMBERS GIVEN.

If the child needs to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use a separate bathroom if possible. The bathroom should be cleaned and disinfected before being used by anyone else.

PPE should be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection if direct personal care is needed and a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as for a very young child or a child with complex needs).

If the child is seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk, call 999. Do not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.

If a member of staff (who was wearing the appropriate PPE and adhering to the social distancing guidelines) has helped someone who was unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature or loss of taste/smell, they do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves. They should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell. Cleaning the affected area with available cleaning products, followed by disinfection after someone with symptoms has left will reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people.

If a staff member becomes ill with COVID-19 symptoms, they should go home as soon as possible. Cleaning the affected area with available cleaning products, followed by disinfection after someone with symptoms has left, will reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people.

Testing

Access to testing is available to all essential workers. This includes anyone involved in education or childcare, including both public and voluntary sector workers.

If a staff member exhibits any symptoms associated with COVID-19 they should not attend school. The Department of Health has implemented a contact tracing programme called Test, Trace and Protect designed to control the spread of COVID19. All staff and pupils are expected to follow the requirements of this programme: to self-isolate if they

are identified as close contacts of cases and to obtain a test for COVID-19 if they develop symptoms.

It is essential that all staff and pupils follow the guidance. By doing so staff and pupils will not only protect themselves but they will also limit the spread of the virus to educational settings and the wider population.

Where staff or pupils, in a cohort that is not operating as a 'protective bubble' (for example, in some senior school classes or where smaller numbers permit social distancing within existing classrooms), have developed symptoms or tested positive all staff and pupils within this cohort who have been in direct contact with the individual must self-isolate and follow PHA guidance. They can return to school when they have completed the necessary period of isolation as advised by the Test, Trace and Protect system.

Enhanced cleaning should be carried out within any classroom in which an individual who has developed COVID-19 has been to prevent the spread of the virus and this should be clearly communicated to staff, parents and pupils to provide assurance that the environment is safe.

PPE

The scientific advice indicates that educational staff do not require protective equipment. However, we are giving staff the option of wearing PPE if they feel they wish to do so.

The virus that causes COVID-19 is mainly transmitted through droplets generated when an infected person coughs, sneezes or speaks. These droplets can infect others if there is close contact or indirectly through contaminated surfaces. The advice for schools is to follow the steps on social distancing, handwashing and other hygiene measure and cleaning of surfaces.

Staff may need to increase their level of protection if working with child who is unable to follow social distancing guidelines or require personal care support. Staff need to minimise close contact (where appropriate), clean frequently touched surfaces and carry out more frequent handwashing. PPE is only needed if working with a child whose care routines already involves the use of PPE due to their intimate care needs.

Reference to PPE in the following situations means:

• fluid-resistant surgical face masks • disposable gloves • disposable plastic aprons • eye protection (for example a face visor or goggles)

Where PPE is recommended, this means that:

- A facemask should be worn if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained from someone with symptoms of COVID-19. [Symptomatic children should not be in school]
- If contact is necessary, gloves, an apron and a facemask should be worn

- If a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of fluids entering the eye (e.g. from coughing, spitting or vomiting), eye protection should also be worn

When PPE is used, it is essential that it is used properly. This includes scrupulous hand hygiene and following guidance on donning (putting on) and doffing (taking off) PPE safely to reduce the risk of contamination.

Face masks:

- MUST cover both nose and mouth
- MUST be changed when they become moist or damaged
- MUST be worn once and then discarded - hands must be cleaned after disposal
- MUST NOT be allowed to dangle around the neck
- MUST NOT be touched once put on, except when carefully removed before disposal

It is not necessary for children to wear PPE however if a child is vulnerable and/or a parent wishes their child to wear a mask within the school environment this will be accommodated.

How should PPE and face coverings be disposed of?

PPE should be removed in a specific order that minimises the potential for cross contamination. The order of removal of PPE should be:

1. Peel off gloves and dispose of in clinical waste
2. Perform hand hygiene, by handwashing with soap and water, or using alcohol gel
3. Remove apron by folding in on itself and place in a clinical waste bin
4. Remove goggles or visor only by the headband or sides and dispose of in clinical waste
5. Remove fluid repellent surgical face mask from behind and dispose in clinical waste
6. Perform hand hygiene All used PPE must be disposed of as waste. Scrupulous hand hygiene is essential to reduce cross-contamination. Coronaviruses can be killed by alcohol hand gel and most disinfectants.

Used PPE and any disposable face coverings should be placed in a refuse bag and can be disposed of as normal domestic waste unless the wearer has symptoms of COVID.

Further guidance is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-nonhealthcare-settings>

HAND HYGIENE IS ESSENTIAL IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING REMOVAL OR TOUCHING OF THE MASK OR FACECOVERING

Recognition of an Outbreak

It is important that potential clusters of cases are identified early so immediate steps can be taken to prevent spread. If two or more children and/or staff are positive for COVID-19 within a 14 day period, the principal or vice principal should contact the Public Health Agency (PHA). A clinical risk assessment will be undertaken by the PHA duty officer. The PHA duty room officer will advise you of what further action to take.

Safeguarding Children

The previous “lockdown” measures and ongoing need for social distancing and self-isolation have reduced the visibility of children and young people and has limited many of the social support structures for children and families. This means that neglect, abuse and escalating needs and challenges may have gone undetected and children and families may not be receiving the support they need. It is important to understand that existing safeguarding and child protection arrangements continue to apply and if you are concerned that a child is at risk of harm, contact children’s social care Gateway Team at: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/publications/gateway-service-teams-contact-details> DE Circular 2017/04 “Safeguarding and Child Protection – A Guide for Schools” can be found at:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201704-safeguarding-andchild-protection-schools-guide-schools>

If necessary, schools should seek advice from the Education Authority’s Child Protection Support Service on 02895 985590.

Staff Training

The Northern Ireland Social Care Council has published a free resource on its learning zone on infection control, hand hygiene and using PPE. Available at:

<https://learningzone.niscc.info/learning-resources/96/supporting-good-infectioncontrol>

Teaching staff will find teaching learner’s resources for Key 1, 2 and 3 on Hand Hygiene, Respiratory Hygiene and Coronavirus at <https://www.e-bug.eu/>