



St. Clare's Primary School

INFECTION CONTROL POLICY

Introduction

St Clare's Primary School aims to provide as healthy an environment as possible for all students and staff through the control of infectious illnesses. At St Clare's it is our aim to minimise the spread of infection for staff and students through the implementation of controls which reduce the transmission and spread of germs. We aim to promote and maintain the health of students and staff through the control of infectious illnesses. Teachers and SNAs will give students positive messages about health and well-being through lessons in SPHE and PE and through conversations with students.

Infection Control

Infectious illness can cause significant ill health among students and can be transmitted by direct or indirect contact:

- through direct contact with an infected person: for example, if you shake or hold their hand, and then touch your own mouth, eyes or nose.
- by infecting oneself with the body's own germs
- by hand to mouth transmission
- by the air/by insects, pests, animals
- indirect transmission: touching objects (e.g. toys, table tops, door handles, light switches) that have previously been touched by an infected person, then touching your own mouth, eyes or nose without first washing your hands.
- by direct person to person through large droplets when coughing, sneezing or even talking within a close distance.

Students are given the following advice about how to reduce the risk of passing on infections to others:

- Wash hands regularly, particularly after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose, after going to the toilet, before eating, after playing, etc.
- Minimise contact between hands and mouth/nose.
- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing.
- Not to attend school if the student has an infectious illness.

HAND WASHING IS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF INFECTION CONTROL IN ST. CLARE'S



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Controlling Infection

The purpose of employing infection control procedures is to reduce the number of germs to a level where there is no longer a threat to public health. This is done by on-going infection control training for staff i.e. the importance of hand washing, food hygiene, cleaning routines etc. thus ensuring hygiene is applied correctly and the risk of infection is minimised.

We will endeavour to minimise student and staff exposure to infection by excluding sick students and/or adults. In the event of an outbreak of an infectious illness the Principal/Deputy Principal will notify the Department of Public Health.

In order to prevent the spread of infections in St. Clare's we follow the guidelines set by the Department of Public Health, regarding the recommended period of time that pupils should be absent from school. [Management of Infectious Diseases in School Chapter 9. \(see Appendix 1\)](#)

A copy is available to all staff on the school server and a hard copy located in the staff central resource area.

During outbreaks of diarrhoea and/or vomiting the following should be actioned:

- The use of marla should be suspended until 48 hours after the symptoms end and the marla used prior to the outbreak is disposed of
- The use of play sand should be suspended until 48 hours after the symptoms end and the sand used prior to the outbreak is disposed of
- The use of water should be suspended until 48 hours after the symptoms end and the water and water toys should be thoroughly cleaned prior to use
- The use of soft toys should be suspended whilst they are adequately washed
- Shared equipment such as building bricks etc. should be steam cleaned in affected classrooms
- Table tops and door handles should be steam cleaned in affected classrooms
- Children who have had diarrhoea and/or vomiting should not be included in any cooking activity for 48 hours



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Cleaning of the Environment

Cleaning is essential in the prevention of infection. Cleaning throughout the school is daily and thorough including the cleaning of all toys and equipment in class. Contract cleaners are employed by the Board of Management to clean the school on a daily basis. **All areas are cleaned daily as part of a written cleaning policy.**

The written cleaning schedule is displayed in the Cleaning Store Room and a copy available to the cleaning staff which details:

- Item(s) and area(s) to be cleaned.
- The frequency of cleaning.
- Cleaning materials to be used.
- Equipment to be used and its method of operation

Cleaning equipment such as cloths, mops and buckets are **colour coded**, washed daily at 60 degrees and replaced regularly.

Deep cleaning takes place at mid-term, holiday periods and during the summer months. The toys, equipment and teaching aids are steamed cleaned regularly.

Cleaning of Blood and Body Fluid Spillages

All spillages of blood, faeces, saliva, vomit, nasal and eye discharges are cleaned up immediately (with staff wearing PPE). When spillages occur, they are cleaned using a product that combines both a detergent and a disinfectant to be effective against bacteria and viruses and suitable for the surfaces used on. Mops are never used for cleaning up blood and body fluid spillages. Absorbent paper towels are used and waste is disposed in secure bins. **(See *Body Fluids Spillage Policy*)**

Cleaning of Toys and Equipment

- Toys and equipment will be cleaned according to the toy cleaning programme and schedule.
- Toys and equipment will be cleaned with hot water and detergent and disinfectant and steam cleaned.

Effective Hand Washing

Good toilet and hand washing facilities are important for infection control. Students of all ages are encouraged to wash their hands and teachers and special needs assistants avail of every opportunity to emphasise the importance of clean hands to



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students in the prevention of the spread of infection. The staff of St. Clare's lead by example. Having clean hands is the best way to stop the spread of harmful germs.

Exclusion from School

If a student is unwell in school, they will wait in the reception area with adult supervision until they are collected by their parents. If a student displays symptoms of COVID-19 (**Appendix 2**) while at school, the student will be escorted to the isolation room (**Room 23**) and the procedures outlined in **Appendix 3** will be implemented.

- Students will be excluded from St Clare's based on the time frames outlined in the exclusion criteria (**see Illness Policy**).
- A doctor's certificate may be required for certain conditions to ensure they are no longer contagious before student returns to school.

Hand Washing Facilities

Adequate hand washing facilities are provided to meet the needs of the school population.

Wash hand basins, warm running water and liquid soap dispensers are provided in all bathrooms, kitchen, staff room and other food preparation areas.

Percussion taps are installed in all hand basins.

Personal Hygiene

Items that may be contaminated with blood or body fluids shall not be shared:

- towels, flannels and toothbrushes
- water bottles/cups/drinking glasses/eating utensils/straws
- mouthguards

Students and staff shall **NOT** share items such as lip gloss, lip balm, lipstick, head gear, combs and hairbrushes to prevent spreading germs to others.



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Suitable hygiene bins are provided for female staff and students to dispose of sanitary protection.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The Board of Management provides all the necessary personal protective equipment to allow tasks to be performed in a safe manner. All staff are advised and shall use the personal protective equipment as directed. Disposable nitrile (latex-free and powder free) gloves and disposable plastic aprons are worn where there is a risk of splashing or contamination with blood/body fluids by all staff.

Pregnancy

If a pregnant woman develops a rash or is in direct contact with someone with a potentially infectious rash, this should be investigated according to HSE guidelines by a doctor. The greatest risk to pregnant women from such infections comes from their own child/children, rather than the workplace.

Some specific risks are:

Chickenpox can affect the pregnancy if the woman has not already had the infection. Report the exposure to midwife and GP at any stage of exposure. The GP and antenatal carer will arrange a blood test to check for immunity. Shingles is caused by the same virus as chickenpox, so anyone who has not had chickenpox is potentially vulnerable to the infection if they have close contact with a case of shingles.

German measles (rubella) If a pregnant woman comes in contact with German measles she should inform her GP and antenatal carer immediately to ensure investigation. The infection may affect the developing baby if the woman is not immune and is exposed in early pregnancy.

Slapped Cheek Syndrome (parvovirus B19) can occasionally affect an unborn child. If exposed in early pregnancy (before 20 weeks) inform whoever is giving antenatal care as this must be investigated promptly.

Measles during pregnancy can result in early delivery or even loss of the baby. If a pregnant woman is exposed she should immediately inform whoever is giving antenatal care to ensure investigation.



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Respiratory Hygiene and Cough Etiquette

Respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette are effective ways to reduce the spread of germs when coughing and sneezing. At all times St. Clare's encourages respiratory and hand hygiene. Posters are displayed on hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene and

cough etiquette in classrooms, toilet areas and common areas throughout the building.

Students are given the following advice:

- Students should cover their mouth with a tissue (or their sleeve if there are no tissues available) when they cough or sneeze and wash their hand afterwards.
- Students should put their used tissues in a bin and wash their hands after contact with respiratory secretions.
- Students should have disposable paper tissues in their schoolbags for use as needed.

These messages are promoted by posters displayed throughout the school, during assembly and during SPHE lesson on personal hygiene and at other appropriate times.

Reporting /Recording of illness

- Staff and parents must report any infectious illness or similar to the Principal.
- Unwell children will be excluded from the school until the appropriate exclusion period for that illness is finished. (See Illness Policy).
- All staff are aware of the procedures for dealing with appropriate cleaning routines and body fluid spillages. All cleaning is checked by Principal/Deputy Principal.
- The Principal will report an outbreak of any infectious disease to the Department of Public Health.
- The teacher will record all details of illness reported to them by parents of a students attending St Clare's on Aladdin the school administration system.

Signed:

Sr. Mercedes Boen

Chairperson – Board of Management

Date:

12.08.2020



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APPENDIX 1

Management of specific infectious diseases

	Exclusions
Chickenpox/Shingles	Those with chickenpox should be excluded from school until scabs are dry; this usually 5-7 days after the appearance of the rash.
Conjunctivitis	Inflammation of the lining of the eye and eyelid, causing sore or red eyes; can be highly contagious if bacterial or viral. Students with red eye and a watery or sticky discharge must be evaluated by a doctor, who will advise about return to school - at least 24 hours after start of treatment, perhaps until fully recovered.
Gastroenteritis/ Food poisoning	Most germs that cause gastroenteritis are very infectious and for that reason pupils or staff members who have had diarrhoea and/or vomiting should be excluded until 48 hours have elapsed since their last episode of diarrhoea and/or vomiting.
Cryptosporidium	Students who have had cryptosporidiosis should be excluded for 48 hours after their first formed faeces. Cases should avoid using swimming pools for two weeks after their first formed faeces.
Norovirus (winter vomiting bug)	Students who have been vomiting or have had diarrhoea should be excluded until 48 hours after resolution of their symptoms. For example, if your child had their her last loose bowel movement at 11 am on Sunday morning, they cannot return to school until Wednesday morning.
Salmonella	Students who have had salmonellosis should be excluded for 48 hours after their first formed faeces.
E. Coli	Students who have had E. Coli should be excluded for 48 hours after their first formed faeces. If a student develops E. Coli the Principal will seek advice from the local Department of Public Health.
Fever	The normal body temperature is 36.5C to 37.2C If a student develops a temperature they should remain at home until 24 hours after the fever has passed.
Glandular Fever	Those involved in high risk body contact/collision sport should be excluded from full team participation for 4 weeks (see Chapter 8 Managing of Infectious Diseases in Schools for further information).
Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (HFM)	While a student is unwell they should be kept away from school. If evidence exists of ongoing transmission within the school exclusion of students until the spots have gone may be necessary. The Principal will seek advice from local Department of Public Health.
Head Lice	It is important to avoid contact between an affected



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	student and others. If parents/guardians notice head lice, or are advised that they have been noticed in the student's hair at school, treatment must begin before the student returns to school. So long as the treatment begins before bed-time, the child may attend school the next day.
Impetigo	The fluid inside the blisters is very infectious. The student should be taken to the GP who will advise about the return to school, usually when the lesions are crusted and healed, or 24 hours after commencing antibiotics. If after 24 hours of antibiotics lesions are not yet healed then they should be covered, e.g. with gauze and tape, until crusted and healed.
Influenza & Influenza like illness	Students with influenza should remain at home for 5 days from when their symptoms began. In general persons with flu are infectious for 3-5 days after symptoms begin but this may be up to a week or more in children. Students should not re-attend school until they are feeling better and their temperature has returned to normal.
Ringworm	A student with suspected ringworm should be taken to their GP and, if ringworm is confirmed, treatment should begin as soon as possible. Once parents/guardians attend to this, the student may return to school.
Rubella (German measles)	For 7 days after onset of the rash, and whilst unwell.



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APPENDIX 2 SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms. They are:

Common symptoms of coronavirus include:

- a fever (high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above).
- a new cough - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry.
- shortness of breath or breathing difficulties.
- loss or change in your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal
- Fatigue
- Aches and Pains

Other uncommon symptoms of coronavirus include:

- sore throat
- headaches
- runny or stuffy noses
- feeling sick or vomiting
- diarrhoea



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Appendix 3: Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19

Students should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of COVID-19. If a student displays symptoms of COVID-19 (**Appendix 2**) while at school, the following procedures will be implemented.

- Parents will be contacted immediately.
- The student will be escorted to the designated isolation (**Room 23**) area via the isolation route, keeping at least 2 meters from the symptomatic person also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic person at all times.
- If it is not possible to maintain a distance of 2 metres a staff member caring for a student should wear a face covering or mask. Gloves should not be used as the virus does not pass through skin.
- Provide a mask for the student with symptoms. The student should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises.
- Assess whether the student who is displaying symptoms can immediately be brought home by their parents who will call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home.
- The student will remain in the isolation area until they are collected by their parents.
- The student should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects.
- The student will cover their mouth and nose with disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bag provided.
- If the student is too unwell to go home or advice is required contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick student is a COVID-19 suspect.

The HSE will inform any staff or 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 and staff and student confidentiality is essential at all times.