



# St. Clare's Primary School

## ILLNESS POLICY

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### Introduction

The school has a duty of care to all its students and members of staff. This policy aims to set out procedures to be followed when students become unwell, to ensure that they are well cared for and that, where the cause is of an infectious nature, others are not exposed needlessly. This policy was drafted in May 2002, reviewed in October 2009 during H1N1 pandemic (Swine Flu) and again in August 2020 following COVID-19.

### Illness or Infection at School Responsibility of Parents/Guardians

Students who are sick should always stay home from school and remain at home until fully recovered. If a student is sent home from school sick, he/she should remain at home at least on the following day or until such stage that he/she is fully recovered. **Children returning to school who are not fully recovered, spread infection or viruses to the other students and or to the staff.**

In order to prevent the spread of infections in school we follow the guidelines outlined in the HSE Publication: [Management of Infectious Diseases in School Chapter 9.](#) regarding the recommended period of time that students should be absent from school. **See Appendix 1**

**Parents will be kept informed of further information or updates from Health Protection Surveillance Centre of the HSE. Preventing the introduction of flu is the first and most important step.**

### When children should be kept at home

Parents are requested **not** to send their children to school if any of the following apply:

- The child has symptoms of an infectious illness that is mentioned in the list of 'Common Ailments requiring Students to Stay at Home' listed in **Appendix 1** or in HSE Publication: [Management of Infectious Diseases in School Chapter 9.](#)
- The child does not feel well enough to participate in the normal programme of curriculum activities.
- The child requires more care than the classroom team is able to provide without affecting the health, safety and school work of the other students.



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- If antibiotics are prescribed for a contagious illness or infection, the child should not attend school until at least 24 hours after treatment has begun and must be showing signs of improvement.
- If head lice or ringworm is noticed, the child may not come to school until treatment has begun. See the end of **Appendix 1**.

If a child has been sent to school and is clearly unwell, as described above, a parent or guardian will be contacted and requested to collect them from school as soon as possible.

**It is important that any student who is unwell should not attend the school.**

### **Pupil Absence - Informing the school**

The parent/guardian must also contact the school office, stating the reason for the child's absence

This is very important for the following reasons:

- If a child has an illness which is recognised by HSE as an infectious disease, staff, other parents/guardians or the authorities may need to be notified. It is vital that information about an infectious disease is passed to the school as soon as possible.
- The National Educational Welfare Board requires the reason for absence to be recorded.

### **Returning to school**

A student who has an infectious ailment, e.g. diarrhoea, vomiting, heavy cold, flu should remain at home until they are no longer infectious. The length of time before return will depend on the ailment and on the treatment. Guidelines in **Appendix 1** or in [Management of Infectious Diseases in School Chapter 9](#) should be followed. For some infectious diseases, the school may require a doctor's 'fitness to return' note before the student is permitted to return to school.

### **Collecting child when ill**

If the school contacts a parent/guardian to say that their child is unwell the parent/guardian must arrange to collect the child as soon as possible. This is primarily for the well-being of the student who is unwell. In the case of infectious



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diseases, it is also very important for the well-being of the other students and the school staff. Staff will aim to keep the student as comfortable as possible while waiting for a parent/guardian to arrive.

### Responsibility of School

If a student feels unwell or appears unwell, on arrival at school or during the school day, the procedures in **Appendix 2** will be followed for the well-being of the student who is sick and of all members of the school community.

On an ongoing basis, St. Clare's aims to promote good hygiene practices that will help prevent transmission of infection. These practices will be taught as part of the SPHE curriculum and will be consolidated throughout the school day. They will include:

- teaching and implementing effective handwashing throughout the school, with staff leading by example
- teaching and implementing respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette, e.g. to turn away when coughing or sneezing, etc.
- facilitating the Schools Immunisation Programme
- provision of PPE gloves, aprons, Biohazard Body Fluid Cleaning Up Kit, suitable sanitising cleaning products and cleaning equipment for staff who are in contact with bodily fluids when caring for a child.

### 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 3**) while at school, the following procedures will be implemented.

- Parents will be contacted immediately.
- The student will be escorted to the designated isolation 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.



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- 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.

**Signed:** *Sr. Mercedes Boen*  
**Chairperson – Board of Management**

**Date:** 12.08.2020



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### APPENDIX 1

#### Management of specific infectious diseases

	Exclusions
<b>Chickenpox/Shingles</b>	Those with chickenpox should be excluded from school until scabs are dry; this usually 5-7 days after the appearance of the rash.
<b>Conjunctivitis</b>	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.
<b>Gastroenteritis/ Food poisoning</b>	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.
<b>Cryptosporidium</b>	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.
<b>Norovirus (winter vomiting bug)</b>	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.
<b>Salmonella</b>	Students who have had salmonellosis should be excluded for 48 hours after their first formed faeces.
<b>E. Coli</b>	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.
<b>Fever</b>	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.
<b>Glandular Fever</b>	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).
<b>Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (HFM)</b>	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



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	be necessary. The Principal will seek advice from local Department of Public Health.
<b>Head Lice</b>	It is important to avoid contact between an affected 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.
<b>Impetigo</b>	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.
<b>Influenza &amp; Influenza like illness</b>	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.
<b>Ringworm</b>	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.
<b>Rubella (German measles)</b>	For 7 days after onset of the rash, and whilst unwell.



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### APPENDIX 2

#### Internal School Procedures when a Student is Unwell (non-COVID-19 related)

- If a staff member is concerned that a student is unwell they will inform the Principal.
- The Principal will consult the First Aider to request advice.
- Having checked with the student, the First Aider will advise the Principal as to whether or not the student is well enough to stay at school.
- If the student needs to go home because they have an infectious illness, or is too unwell to participate in school activities, the Secretary will make contact with the parents.
- In the case of a student who is unwell who is awaiting collection, further contact with other students will be limited by removing them from the classroom and staff will ensure that the student is supervised, reassured and kept warm and comfortable.
- If symptoms appear to be serious or distressing an ambulance and/or doctor should be called.
- All other necessary precautions will be taken to limit the spread of infection, i.e. careful hand-washing and use of suitable sanitising cleaning products, as required.
- If a particular student has symptoms of an infectious disease which needs to be reported to staff and other parents, or to the HSE, the Principal will ensure this is communicated promptly and in accordance with GDPR.
- If the school is concerned that there may be an outbreak of an infectious disease the Principal will contact the local Department of Public Health for further advice and support. Department of Public Health, Dr. Stevens Hospital, Dublin 8 Phone: 01 6352145



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### APPENDIX 3 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