
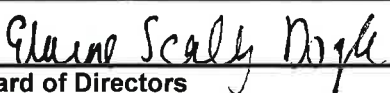
 Killorglin Community Childcare Centre CLG		<b>PANDEMIC POLICY</b>			
POLICY NO.:	<b>GP No. 26</b>	REV. NO.:	<b>11</b>	REV. DATE:	<b>01.04.2025</b>

PREPARED BY:  Centre Manager	Date: 30/3/25
APPROVED BY:  Board of Directors	Date: 15/5/25

This policy gives an overview of operations and procedures that will be put in place in case of a pandemic situation.

### Child Drop-Off and Collection:

For Butterflies (Montessori), Bumblebees pre-school and Toddlers room there will be a new system where parents queue and only bring their children close to the front door of the building. That child will be met by a staff member and then taken to the appropriate room. For Caterpillars pre-school, children will be accepted by a staff member from the side entrance to the room which can be accessed through the front play area (gate beside the front door). Wobblers, Junior Pre-school, Toddlers and Ladybirds pre-school will access those rooms at the rear of the building. Parents can access the rear of the building by passing the kitchen area and proceeding to the end of the shed block. Access to the rear of the building is through the gate in this area. Caterpillars pre-school, Wobblers, Junior pre-school, Toddlers and Ladybirds pre-school will only be accessible in this manner for set periods of time, i.e. morning drop-off times and mid-day/evening collection times. If you arrive outside of these times you will have to access the building via the front door.

No parents/guardians will be permitted to enter the building unless absolutely necessary. If this should be necessary, then the parents/guardians will have to wash their hands or administer hand sanitizer and wear a mask to enter the building. We have a hand washing sink(s) outside the front door of the building and near the kitchen area so that all children can wash their hands before entering the building.

If deemed necessary the staff member receiving the children will take each child's (and adult's if appropriate) temperature with an infra-red thermometer which reads temperature without any contact between the person and the thermometer, to ensure that it is no higher than 38 deg. Celsius.

The temperature will only be recorded on the 'High Temperature Record Sheet' if it is higher than this level. Should this occur a senior member of staff will discuss this contraindication with the parent and record same on the temperature log sheet. Only temperatures that are over the limit (38°C) will be recorded. The child may not be able to enter the building on this day.

On collection in the evenings parents can utilise the intercom system at the front door to alert staff in their child's room that they are there to collect their child. Again, no parent/guardian shall enter the building. The child will be brought to the front door by a staff member and exchanged over the drop zone outside the front door. Any relevant information should be relayed to the parent at the front door where appropriate or via written report if more applicable.

### **Pod System:**

In line with best practice and where necessary we will, where practicable, operate the rooms on a 'pod' basis. This will mean that we will operate a room with the same children and the same staff daily. This will limit the cross-over and interactions with large numbers of children and staff. It is likely that some rooms will require an additional floating staff member to facilitate breaks, but we will endeavour to allocate the same person, where possible, to this role.

Whilst social distancing may not be necessary in a play pod (child group) mixing with other groups/play pods should be avoided. Staff from different play pods are to maintain social distancing (2 metres). Where two staff are part of one pod they should social distance as far as is practicable. Mixing of groups is to be avoided (for example circle time). Where necessary, tables and chairs in classrooms and the staff room are to be removed to limit the number of people per table and to maintain social distancing. Toys should not be shared between play pods.

### **Physical Division of Rooms:**

Once the number of children in a room reaches a point where additional staff (more than 2) are required to operate in a room then we may adopt more physical divisions within the room if practicable. We will orchestrate same with existing furniture in the room and with additional screens if necessary.

If a room has two toilets within its setting, then where possible one toilet will be allocated to each pod operating within that room.

### **Equipment and Cleaning:**

It is recommended that play equipment is limited within each room but that a sufficient supply is present to ensure a positive experience for the children. If equipment is removed to facilitate more immediate cleaning, then these items should be rotated from storage on a weekly basis to ensure a wide range of equipment is still available to the children.

No soft toys will be permitted, and soft furnishings will be avoided as much as possible.

Cleaning of the environment, furnishings and equipment will be required to be undertaken daily and will be logged accordingly. The responsibility for this will primarily lie with the staff in each room, however Scamps and Scholars will support such a regime in the most appropriate manner. Information/instructions will be relayed to the team on a regular basis.

### **Curriculum and Planning:**

Each room should follow the standard approach to planning through our emerging curriculum boards, etc.

### **Outdoor Play Areas:**

Outdoor play areas will be rostered for each room. It may be the case that a room will be allocated the same outdoor play area weekly and this will help to avoid any unwanted cross overs. It will be necessary that all equipment in such an outdoor play area should be fully disinfected as often as possible but it is also necessary for all children to wash their hands on entering and leaving their designated outdoor play area. Other play equipment in these areas will be scheduled. Time spent outdoors should be maximized where possible. The use of the outdoor area must be staggered. Nevertheless, two play pods can play outdoors at the same time provided they adhere to social distancing.

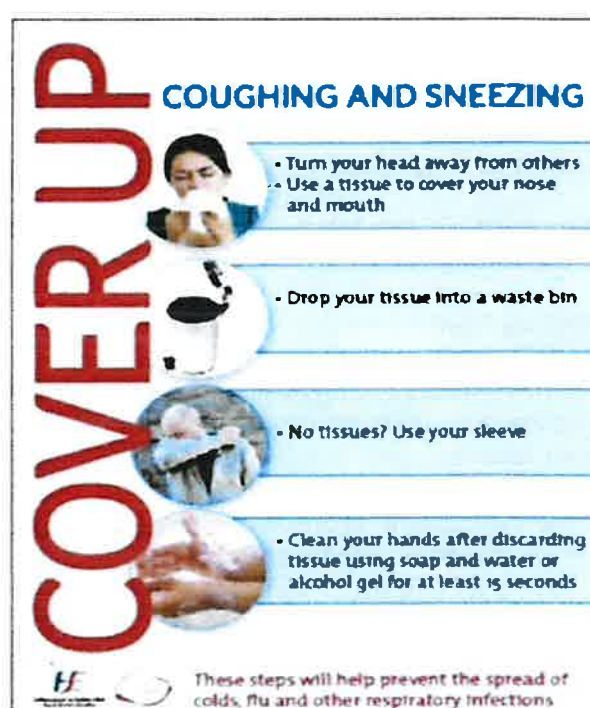
Fixed play equipment in the outdoor area should be cleaned and disinfected after each group uses the area and a written record maintained of such cleaning.

### **Sports Field:**

The adjacent sports field is available to all the children of Scamps and Scholars. We will encourage that this facility be utilised extensively (weather permitting) as any required social distancing is more achievable when numerous play pods are in this space.

### **Physical Distancing for Children:**

It is not possible to observe physical distancing when caring for young children and it is not practical or advisable to enforce physical distancing between young children who are cared for as a group/play pod.



### **Good Hand Hygiene and Cough/Sneeze Etiquette:**

It is imperative that we ensure that all children demonstrate good hand hygiene and wash their hands throughout the day. The poster above shows when, throughout the day, a child's hands must be washed but this list is not exhaustive. The second poster above demonstrates good cough/sneeze etiquette. All personal waste, including used tissues and all cleaning waste, should be placed in a plastic bag. The bag should be tied when it is almost full and placed into a second bin bag and tied. Once the bag has been tied securely it should be placed in the outside bin for bin collection.

### **Amendments to Normal Services:**

Amendments to normal service operations will occur in response to a pandemic situation. As an example, breakfast club may not operate so opening times and closing times may vary. Such changes in times will be informed to parents via our website, Facebook page, SMS message, verbal communication and posters placed at the entrance/exit points of the building.

We will also stagger the starting and finishing times for all services to allow for controlled drop-offs and collection times for all children. Parents/guardians may wait in cars so as to avoid congregating at the entrance points. Distancing markers will be placed outside the building where possible. Children will be brought straight to their specific rooms on arrival.

### **Assigned Duties for Staff:**

As per pandemic recommendations staff will be assigned fixed duties as much as is possible. This could mean being allocated to a specific room, allocated specific cleaning duties, etc. It will not be possible to rotate such duties amongst others to avoid unnecessary cross-over with other pods and other staff.

### **Staff Members' Temperature Check:**

Each staff member will take their own temperature on arrival at work. Only temperatures higher than 38 deg. Celsius need to be recorded. This will be recorded on each staff member's own individual pandemic temperature sheet. The manager or deputy manager will discuss further with the staff members and see if further steps will be required thereafter. There is an ample supply of hand sanitizer located throughout the building for use by staff and children.

### **Staff Members Hand Hygiene and Sneeze/Cough Etiquette:**

It is extremely important that staff lead by example in relation to good hand hygiene and good sneeze/cough etiquette. The poster on the previous page outlines the techniques required.

### **PPE for Staff:**

We have a supply of gloves and plastic aprons which can be utilised throughout the working day. We also have a supply of disposable masks that can be used by staff. The protocol for the use of masks is as follows:

- A mask is recommended for use if adults are not in a position to physical distance the required 2 metres. They are not recommended for any other part of the working day. However, staff may choose to wear masks at different times throughout the day if they feel it is necessary to do so.
- All masks should be utilised using good mask etiquette. Please refer to the HSE training video on same if required and follow the technique demonstrated.
- Masks are personal protective equipment and as such are the responsibility of each staff member to wash/change and use in the correct manner as is appropriate.
- All sinks in the building are facilitated with anti-bacterial soap. We also provide hand sanitizer throughout the building for staff to utilise throughout the working day.
- Gloves may be worn by staff in the normal manner to facilitate nappy changing, etc. but staff can wear gloves throughout the day if desired. Staff are to observe good hand hygiene practices even if they are wearing gloves.
- As pandemics are a global phenomenon it may be challenging to obtain PPE on an ongoing basis. Therefore, PPE should not be used flippantly, and staff are to be aware of the challenges of sourcing such equipment on an ongoing basis.

Each room will have their own stock of PPE.

### **Touch Points:**

There are hundreds of touch points throughout the building. Touch points are anything that a human hand comes into contact with. Obvious ones are door handles, taps, phones, light switches, etc.

There will be cleaning rosters in place to monitor and clean these items regularly. However, good hand hygiene will negate any risks associated with these touch points. We will depend on a combination of both good hand hygiene and regular cleaning to ensure we negate any risks associated with touch points. However, items that are exposed to droplets from the mouth or nose must be wiped clean with an appropriate disinfectant.

There are high traffic personal use areas in the building, i.e. staff toilet areas, where notices have been put in place about the touch points and the need to clean them to protect staff and their colleagues.

### **Ventilation of Rooms:**

Rooms must be kept well ventilated by keeping windows open where possible at intervals throughout the day or by using effective mechanical ventilation if available and appropriate.

### **Wobblers and Toddlers:**

Additional hand washing is required when caring for babies or children who are teething or dribbling.

Particular attention should be paid to personal hygiene when caring for babies and young children who require close physical contact and comfort. Contact points such as neck or arms may become contaminated with secretions or mucous and these should be washed immediately. Visibly soiled clothing of staff or children should be changed and hands washed. Children's faces, and particularly those of infants and toddlers, must be kept clean of secretions by careful and gentle washing.

Staff must ensure that they have an adequate quantity of additional clean clothes to change into if required throughout the day. Each child should also have an adequate supply of additional clean clothing available to them in the service.

Individual mouthing toys used by children who are teething must be brought in from home and only used if required. Staff should be vigilant that these items, if used, are not transferred between children and removed immediately after use. Such items must be sterilized in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines. This will also apply to toys located in the room which children mouth. It is important to note manufacturers guidelines as sterilising solution requirements may change due to pandemic situations. Comfort toys from home may be brought into the service but must not be shared with other children.

### **Sleeping Arrangements:**

Sleeping cots will be arranged as normal so that there is a physical distance of 50cm between cots. They will be arranged also so that there is physical distance between groups of cots for children from different pods. If more than one play pod is present in a sleep area/room, there will be a distance of 2 metres between the different play pods (groups of children).

Cots ideally should not be used by more than one child, and it is preferable that each child requiring a cot will have their own named cot or sleep bed/mat and their own named bed linen. However, if it is necessary that a cot (not a mattress) should be shared it will be disinfected between the use of different children. Cleaning will be undertaken as follows:

- Clean the cot frame.
- Clean the mattress.
- Change the bed linen.
- Label the sleep equipment with the name(s) of the child(ren) who use the cot.

A record of when the bed linen was changed is to be kept.

Daily cleaning of mattresses and sleep mats will take place with additional cleaning required when visibly soiled.

The provision of individual sheets and bed linen is required, and staff must be vigilant in the safe removal and laundering of soiled linens and the appropriate storage of clean bed linens.

All laundry is to be washed at the highest temperature that the fabric can tolerate.

#### **Nappy Changing:**

Staff will wear PPE which must include disposable single use plastic aprons and non-powdered, non-permeable gloves to negate the risks of coming into contact with body fluids during nappy changing. Face masks during this process are at the discretion of each staff member. Staff are reminded to adhere to good hand hygiene throughout the process.

#### **Staff Breaks:**

The staff room will only accommodate up to 3 staff (including the working desk in the corner). Breaks will be staggered as much as possible. However, due to current space restrictions the staff room may not be available to all staff during break times. It may be necessary for some staff to take their breaks in their car. Some outdoor furnishings will also be provided to accommodate as many staff as possible during break times. Staff flexibility and consideration will be appreciated in this matter.

No breaks are permitted to be taken in the kitchen at any time.

#### **Fire Evacuation:**

Fire drills during a pandemic will be restricted to an advised nominated room rather than the entire building. This is to avoid an unnecessary cross over of staff and children from various rooms/pods.

In the instance of an actual fire the entire building will follow the normal fire evac procedure in full.

#### **Pandemic Staff Officers:**

Due to the size of our centre when fully operational it has been decided to appoint 2 Pandemic Staff Officers to represent staff. This will assist in all aspects of communication. The 2 officers will be named/notified on the noticeboard in the staff room. The safety committee will be represented by one of the two officers.

#### **Administration Office:**

Fee payment by parents/guardians will be discharged by:

- Credit transfer/online banking.
- Cash payment by envelope.
- Card payment over the phone.

Parents/guardians will not be permitted to enter the building to discharge the fees in person.

The administration/reception office is only accessible to administrative staff. Rostering for this area will be such so as to avoid having more than one administrator on at any one time. Should a staff member have to enter this area they should be aware of their inability to physically distance themselves and wear a mask as appropriate.

**Kitchen:**

The kitchen area is only available to kitchen staff assigned to same. It is not permitted for general staff to enter this area at any time during the day.

Staff cannot under any circumstances (except in the event of fire evacuation) use the kitchen door to enter or exit the building.

Rostering for the kitchen will be devised to ensure as much as possible that only 2 members of the kitchen team are in place at any given time.

Staff members in the kitchen area will maintain physical distance throughout the working day. There will be periods of required crossover during some operations and face masks must be worn at these times.

**Distribution of Food to the Rooms:**

The task of distributing food from the kitchen to the childcare rooms will be undertaken solely by the kitchen staff. The designated kitchen staff member will wear a mask and gloves.

On opening the door to the childcare room all staff and children in the room will retreat away from the door area. The kitchen staff member will place the food in the designated drop zone which will be located just inside the door of the room.

Supplementary and incidental food items should be communicated to the kitchen by phone and the designated staff member will bring same to the room in the manner detailed above.

**Food Deliveries:**

No delivery persons will be permitted to enter the kitchen area. Deliveries will be presented on a designated table provided inside the kitchen door. Any relevant dockets associated with the delivery will be left with the delivery or under the delivery.



Deliveries will be presented in a manner appropriate for ease of use thereafter.

No outer packaging (boxes, etc.) will be left at the centre. Such items should be removed by the delivery person.

Kitchen staff may deem it appropriate to clean down items received in a delivery although this is not an absolute requirement of this policy. There is no evidence to date of viruses that cause respiratory illnesses being transmitted via food or food packaging. Viruses cannot multiply in food; they need animal or human hosts to multiply.

**General Deliveries:**

General deliveries will be managed in a similar manner as described above. Deliveries will be requested to be made in the afternoons/evenings to avoid the busier morning times.

The designated drop zone for children can be utilised to receive such deliveries. If the items cannot be stored immediately the delivery must be placed in an area that ensures it does not become a hazard.

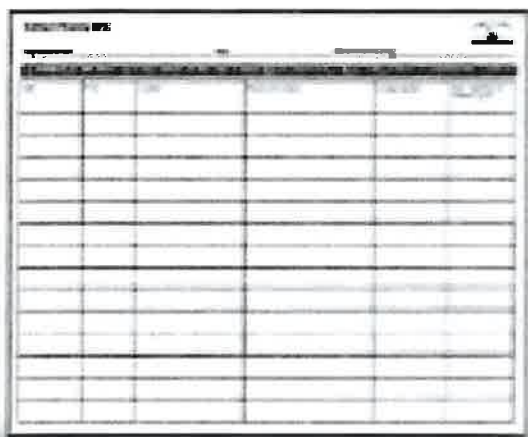
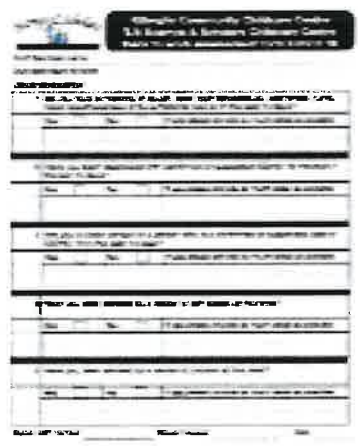
### **Dishwasher Temperature:**

Dishwasher temperature must be taken daily and should be 60 deg. Celsius at a minimum. The same applies to the toy cleaning dishwasher.

### **Staff Contact Tracing Form:**

This is a requirement under pandemic regulations. It is to ensure efficient contact tracing should pandemic viral illness case transpire at Scamps and Scholars. Staff must log individuals with whom they have been in close contact for 15 minutes or more with a physical distance of less than 2 metres or closed space contact for 2 hours or more.

It is possible that an accumulation of 15 minutes throughout the day could also be deemed a close contact.

A blank contact tracing grid with 10 columns and 20 rows. The columns are labeled at the top: 'Date', 'Time', 'Name', 'Address', 'Phone', 'Email', 'Notes', 'Status', 'Follow-up', and 'Signature'. The rows are empty for data entry.A completed contact tracing form with a header and multiple sections for data entry. The header includes 'Scamps & Scholars Children Centre', '100 Kesh Road, Kesh, Co. Monaghan', and 'Phone: 047 931 1111'. The form has several sections with labels like 'Name', 'Address', 'Phone', 'Email', 'Notes', 'Status', 'Follow-up', and 'Signature'. Some sections are filled with text, while others are empty.

You will be considered a close contact if the person you were in contact with:

- Have symptoms of the virus and you were in contact with them up to 48 hours before they developed symptoms and started self-isolating.
- Did not have symptoms and you were in contact with them up to 24 hours before they tested positive for the virus.

It is the responsibility of the centre to assist or carry out contact tracing should the need arise.

The contact tracing sheet above will be made available to all staff, and it will be each staff members responsibility to record such contacts daily.

Additional record sheets are available if required. Any completed forms (one entry or more) should be submitted to the manager's office at the end of each week where they will be stored securely.

### **Close Contacts of Travelers from High Risk Countries:**

If you are a close contact of someone who tested positive after arriving in Ireland from a high risk country you should phone your doctor and follow guidance given by them.

### **Return to Work Form:**

All staff, at a minimum of 3 days before returning to work, must complete in full the Return to Work Form (see above). These completed forms must be returned to the manager. The same form must be utilised if you have been on annual leave for one week or more. Failure to return this form as outlined above will negate the employees' return to work.

If any child is absent from the centre it is imperative that parents/guardians notify the centre of the reason for such an absence. The centre must be made aware if the child is testing positive for a pandemic illness and the child must be excluded from the centre for the duration of the illness and up to 48 hours after receiving a negative test result on recovery. A 'Return to Educational Facility' declaration form must be completed by a parent/guardian before the child returns to the centre.

### **Incident Plan/Response Plan:**

The following incident plan outlines actions to be taken should a child/staff member have or is suspected of having a pandemic viral infection:

- There will be a designated isolation area appointed in or beside the premises. The designated area should/will isolate the person behind a closed door but only if the person does not need to be observed. If they do need to be observed, then the door should be left ajar and a staff member should monitor the person from the entrance to the area if possible.
- The child/staff member should wear one of the disposable masks available. The room should have some ventilation. Persons dealing with the child/adult with the suspected infection must wear a minimum level of PPE which would be gloves, face mask and/or visor. Tissues will also be made available.
- It is not advisable that another person should stay within the confines of the isolation room but in the case of a child the door to the space should remain open whilst privacy being maintained as much as possible.
- In the case of a child, it is best practice that one member of staff deals with the child throughout the process. Constant reassurances must be provided by the staff member to the child to ensure that the child doesn't become overly anxious. Once the child is collected the area must be fully cleaned with cleaning products provided. It is recommended to have the area fogged also if such equipment is available.
- All used PPE should be bagged and ensuring the bag is tied should be placed in the quarantine bin adjacent to the main bins for 3 days. The bag should be labelled with the appropriate date and time. After this period of quarantine, the same staff member must remove the bag to general waste while wearing appropriate PPE.

### **Close Contacts:**

All parents, staff and children must follow all regulations/guidelines put in place by the HSE in relation to pandemic infections/close contacts/contact tracing. Isolation procedures must be followed, and movements must be restricted whilst infected. It is very important that anyone who is a close contact is very aware of their symptoms and self-isolate and undergo testing should they develop any symptoms.

### **Testing:**

As per HSE guideline (27.09.2021) the following is an overview of the process:

Where a case of viral pandemic infection is detected in our centre it is notified to the HSE. You may be contacted by the HSE and will have to undertake contact tracing. You may be advised as a close contact to restrict your/your child's movements. An email will be issued from Scamps and Scholars advising what procedures are to be followed, i.e. if a room/play/building is to be closed temporarily.

Individuals who are fully vaccinated and have no symptoms of viral infection or have recovered in the past 9 months may be advised that they do not have to restrict their movements.

If a staff member has been in contact with a suspected case of viral pandemic infection they can remain at work if the following criteria is met:

- If the staff member is double vaccinated/boosted.
- If the staff member has no symptoms.
- If the staff member is not immune compromised.

### Symptoms (of Covid-19):

Sneezing is not a common symptom of Covid-19. Runny and stuffy noses and sore throats can be symptoms of Covid-19 alongside the standard symptoms. If a child presents with such symptoms the centre may action this by contacting the parents.

Before any staff member contacts a parent they will ensure that they have familiarised themselves, in detail, with any medical conditions that the child has and that we have already been notified of via the registration form or additional documentation that may have been submitted supplementary to the registration form. This will ensure that all staff have informed communications with a parent regarding the current situation that is presenting.

The Manager/Deputy Manager must be informed of such communications.

### Covid-19 vs. Cold/Flu Symptoms:

#### Match the symptoms with the illness

	COVID19	Cold	Flu	Allergies
Fever	✓		✓	
Cough	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sore throat	✓	✓	✓	✓
Shortness of breath	✓		✓	
Fatigue	✓	✓	✓	✓
Diarrhea	✓		✓	
Vomiting	✓		✓	
Runny nose	✓	✓		✓
Body aches	✓	✓	✓	

The goal is always to find a way for us to retain the child in the service, but only if we are sure the child does not have Covid-19. However, this may entail a parent having to get a doctor's letter to state that the child is safe to return to the centre.

For more long term conditions and symptoms associated with an ongoing condition, such as asthma, we will accept a doctor's note that denotes associated symptoms to such a condition and that they pose no risk to the centre from a Covid-19 view point.

Staff will monitor, without inadvertently pursuing same, any new symptom that the child may present with and make a judgement call on whether further action, in partnership with the parent, is required.

In the event that a child is suspected of having Covid-19 or other pandemic viral illness then all current and up to date protocols and guidelines issued by the health authority are to be followed.

**Parents should not send their child to Scamps and Scholars if any of the following symptoms present:**

The child has -

- A temperature of 38°C or above.
- A new cough, loss or changed sense of taste or smell, or a shortness of breath.
- Been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid-19.
- Been living with someone who is unwell and may have Covid-19.
- An existing breathing condition that has recently gotten worse.
- A runny or stuffy nose.

In the absence of the availability of a PCR test (or other relevant test) for children aged from 4 to 12 years old all relevant update HSE protocols are to be followed.

**If a Child has Symptoms at Scamps and Scholars:**

- The child will be taken to the isolation room/area by a member of staff.
- The staff member will wear disposable gloves, apron, mask and a visor is wished.
- The door to the isolation unit will be left open and the staff member can stay outside in view of the child unless it is necessary to be inside the room/area with the child.
- The parents of the child will be phoned by another staff member and asked to collect the child.
- Clearance from the GP or other medical body must be sought before the child returns to the centre.
- The isolation room/area will be wiped down with disinfectant and fogged if desired once the child has left.

**Advice for Parents of a Child who Tests Positive for Covid-19:**

Parents need to:

- Isolate your child from other people – this means keeping them at home and avoiding contact with other people as much as possible. Phone your GP – they will advise on the best course of action.
- Everyone that the child has contact with should also restrict their movements at least until the child gets a diagnosis from the GP or a coronavirus test result. This means not going to school, childcare centre or work.
- Parents should treat the child at home for symptoms.
- The child should only leave home to visit their GP.
- Follow HSE/GP guidelines/advice as appropriate.

### **Other Symptoms:**

If your child has symptoms such as headaches or a sore throat keep them at home for at least 48 hours. These are not common Covid-19 symptoms but they could be a sign of another infection. You and the rest of the family can continue with their normal routine. You do not need to restrict movement as long as you are not ill.

Keep an eye on your child's symptoms for 48 hours. After 48 hours it is usually ok to send your child back to the childcare centre as long as:

- Their symptoms do not get worse.
- They do not develop new symptoms.
- They do not need paracetamol or ibuprofen during these 48 hours.

### **Diarrohea:**

If your child has diarrohea they should stay at home and not go to childcare/school until they have not had diarrohea for 48 hours.

You and the rest of your family can continue your normal routine. You do not need to restrict your movements as long as you are not ill.

### **Travel Abroad:**

Your child will need to restrict their movements for 14 days if they have just returned from a country that is not on the 'travel green list'. This means that they should stay at home and not attend this centre. They do not need to see a GP unless they develop symptoms.

Everyone they travelled with should also stay at home for 14 days once they return to Ireland or alternatively follow the most up to date HSE restrictions advice.

### **Children Who Are Close Contacts of Someone Who has Covid-19 or Similar Pandemic Illness:**

If your child develops symptoms follow all up to date and relevant advice from the HSE. Isolate your child, phone your GP and restrict your movements as necessary.

If your child has no symptoms but has been in close contact with someone infected, they should follow all up to date and relevant advice from the HSE. If advised they should –

- Restrict their movements for the required timeframe (possibly up to 2 weeks) and refrain from attending the childcare centre/school.
- Get tested for Covid-19 or other relevant pandemic virus – contact your GP or HSE website.

These steps should be taken even if the child feels well. Household members, such as siblings, do not need to restrict their movements as long as the child has no symptoms.

Children who have no symptoms but have been a close contact should have 2 tests done as it can take up to 14 days for the virus to show up after exposure to it. The second test should be 7 days after the last contact with the infected person.

### **When It's OK to Send your Child to Childcare:**

As long as your child has not been in close contact with someone who has the virus it is ok to send them to childcare or school if they:

- Only have a sneeze.
- Do not have temperature of 38°C or more (their temperature must not have been lowered by taking any form of paracetamol or ibuprofen).
- Do not have a new cough.
- Do not live with anyone who is unwell and may have Covid-19
- Have been told by a GP that their illness is caused by something else that is not Covid-19. Your GP will tell you if you can return the child to childcare/school.
- Have a negative Covid-19 test result and not had symptoms for 48 hours.
- Have not had diarrhoea for 48 hours.

Children who are close contacts of someone who has Covid-19 should follow all relevant medical advice and restrict their movements.

Your child does not need a GP medical certificate or note to return to childcare. The parent should complete and sign the 'Return to Educational Facility Parental Declaration' Form to confirm that their child is well enough to attend childcare/school (see sample form, page 8).

### **Sneezing:**

You do not need to restrict your child's movements if the only symptom they have is sneezing. They can continue to attend the centre. If your child has a high temperature along with other symptoms then relevant up to date protocols should be followed. Sneezing on it's own is more likely to be a symptom of a cold or other viral infection.

### **Staff Shortages:**

As a childcare centre we are aware that we will have staff that will not be able to attend the centre on various occasions due to having to self isolate. With this in mind Scamps and Scholars will do its best to recruit additional staff members to ensure that the centre will continue to operate at full capacity.

That being said, it is possible that we may encounter periods where we will have a staffing shortage in the centre. Should such circumstances arise and in the event that we are unable to maintain staff/child ratios in the centre it may be necessary to close a room or rooms on a temporary basis.

We will advise parents of such an outcome with as much notice as possible, but it should be acknowledged that such an event may occur with very little notice.

### **Sand, Rice and Mala Play:**

These 3 items will be children involved in mixed play and as such all relevant protocols will be followed to ensure we meet the requirements in relation to Covid-19 restrictions.

Each room will schedule this type of play weekly in advance and once the play event is complete the sand, rice or mala will be quarantined for a minimum of 72 hours. Thereafter, the product may be used again following the same procedure. Normal turnover and replacement of these products will apply. The sand pit in the outdoor area will be fully raked by staff after their group/pod leaves the area.

### **Fogging Machine:**

Scamps and Scholars will utilise a fogging disinfecting machine to enhance our disinfecting regime.

### **Staff Leave of Absence due to Covid-19:**

It is likely that we will have staff members who will be absent due to the protocols surrounding contacts/close contacts and Covid-19. These would break down into the following 2 categories:

1. Covid-19 situations that arise outside of Scamps and Scholars.
2. Covid-19 situations that arise at Scamps and Scholars.

#### **1. Covid-19 situations that arise outside of Scamps and Scholars:**

Should a staff member have to self-isolate due to either symptoms that are aligned with Covid-19 or close contact of someone with Covid-19 then Scamps and Scholars will support that staff member in the following ways:

- Staff may utilise their sick days in line with sick pay contract agreement.
- In the absence of sick days being available staff may take holidays to cover their absence.
- If an official instruction is received to stay at home from the GP, medical professional or HSE, application for state funded illness benefit may be applied for if all paid in-house sick leave has been used up.
- Time in lieu, if available, may be utilised in agreement with the manager.

#### **2. Covid-19 situations that arise at Scamps and Scholars:**

Current guidelines for childcare facilities indicate that if there is a suspected case in the centre the affected room must close for a period of time to be determined by the HSE at the time. This means that it is possible that staff assigned to the room may be instructed to stay at home for the duration of the closure. In these circumstances only the following will apply:

- Obtain a medical certificate by phone and sign up for the Covid-19 illness benefit payment available through the state.
- Opt for this payment to be made to 'the employer'.
- The centre will top up this payment to your normal pay for the duration of the enforced absence (up to a maximum of a 2 weeks absence). This can happen up to a maximum of 3 occurrences, therefore up to a maximum of 6 weeks in total over 3 separate instances of enforced Covid-19 related absence.
- This will be in addition to your contracted 7 days paid sick leave.
- The centre will not top up any social welfare payment in the absence of a Covid-19 related sick cert.

Management discretion can be applied to hardship cases as they arise.

### **Mask Wearing in the Over 9 Years of Age Cohort:**

All children over 9 years of age (primarily Rascals afterschools group) must wear a mask on the bus to and from school.

The same age group must wear a mask while attending the centre while engaged in any static activity (homework, board games, etc.).

For any outside activity – no mask is required unless the child chooses to wear it themselves.

For any sporting activity – no mask is required unless the child chooses to wear it themselves.

For any child with medical difficulties in breathing – no mask is required unless the child chooses to wear it themselves.

## Drop off & collection points

