

POLICY NO.57 – Pandemic Policy

REV: 10 DATE: 10.08.2022

This policy gives an overview of operations & procedures that will be invoked in the case of a response required to a pandemic situation deemed necessary

Child drop off & collection

For Butterflies, Bumble Bees, & Toddlers have a new system where parents queue and will only bring their children close to the front door of the building and that child will be met by a staff member and then will be taken to the appropriate room. For Caterpillars children will be accepted from the side entrance to the room which can be access through the front play area. Wobblers, Junior Preschool and Ladybirds Preschool will access those rooms from the rear of the building. Parents can access the rear of the building by passing by the kitchen area and proceeding the the end of the shed block and accessing the rear of the building through the gate in this area. Caterpillars, Wobblers, Junior preschool and Ladybirds will only be accessible in this manner for set periods of time at drop off and collection times. If you arrive outside of these times you will have to access the service via the front door.

No parents/guardians will be permitted in the building unless absolutely necessary. If this should be necessary then the parents / guardian will have to wash their hands or administer hand sanitiser & wear a mask on entering the building. We will have a hand washing sink(s) outside the front door 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 (& adult if appropriate) temperature with an infra red thermometer, which reads temperature without any contact between the person and the thermometer, to ensure it is no greater than 38 degrees Celsius.

A 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 degrees) will be recorded. The child may not be able to attend the centre on this day.

On collection in the evenings, parents can utilise the intercom system to alert the staff member at the reception desk of whom they are collecting. In the absence of reception being covered the intercom "phone" will be allocated to another staff member. Again no parent / guardian should enter the building. The child should be brought to the front door by a staff member and exchanged over the drop zone outside the front door. Any information should be relaid to the parent at the front door where appropriate or via written report if more applicable.

[See appendix 1](#)

Pod system

In line with best practise & where necessary, we will where practical operate the rooms on a "pod" basis. This will entail that we 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 & staff.

It will be 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 (children), mixing with other groups/play-pods should be avoided. Staff from different 'play-pods' should maintain social distancing (2 metres). Where two staff are part of one pod, they should social distance as far as is practicable. Avoid mixing of groups (for example circle time). Where necessary, remove tables/chairs in classrooms/ staff room to limit the number of people per table and 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) will be required to operate in a certain room, then we may adopt physical divisions within the room if practicable. We will orchestrate same with existing furniture in the room 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 & cleaning

It is recommended that play equipment is limited within each room but that a sufficient amount 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 are permitted and soft furnishings should be avoided as much as possible.

Cleaning of the environment, furnishings & 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 & Scholars will support such a regime in the most appropriate manner and will be relayed to the team on a regular basis.

Curriculum & Planning

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

Out door play areas

Out door play areas will be rostered for each room. It may be the case that your room will be allocated the same outdoor 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 is possible but it is also necessary for all children to wash their hands on entering & on leaving their designated outdoor play area. Other play equipment in these areas will be scheduled. Time spent outdoors should be maximised 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.

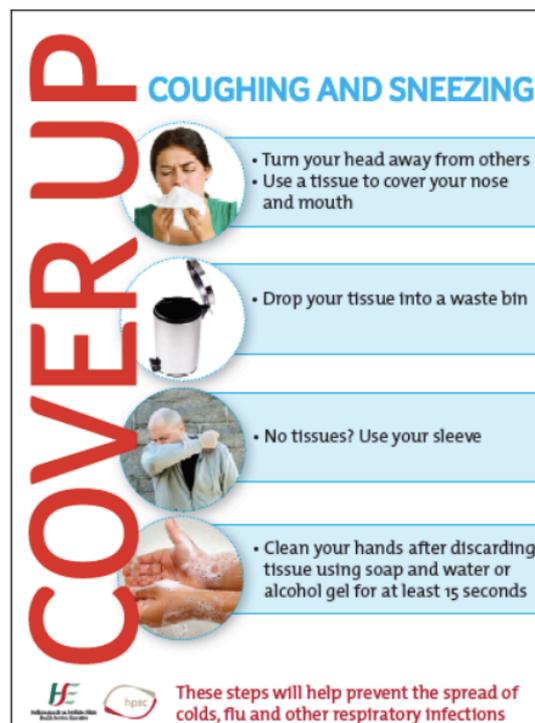
Fixed play equipment in the outdoor area should be cleaned and disinfected after each group uses the area with written record available.

Sports Field

The adjacent Sports field is still available to all the children at Scamps & Scholars. We will be encouraging (weather permitting) that this facility be utilised extensively as any required distancing is more than achievable while numerous pods are in this space.

Physical distancing for Children

It is not possible to observe physical distancing when caring for a young child 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 & cough/sneeze ethic

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

Amendments to normal services

Amendments to normal service operations will transpire in response to this pandemic. As an example we will not be running a breakfast club over the summer period so the centre will open at 7.30pm/8.30pm until 5.30pm. This may change as we progress through this pandemic. Other necessary adjustments may take place throughout this pandemic. Any such changes will be communicated in the standard formats - notice at the Centre, facebook page, Website & SMS.

We also, stagger the starting and finishing times for all services will be staggered to allow for controlled drop off and collection of children. Scheduled arrival and collection times for individual children so that all children do not arrive or leave at the same time will be put in place. Parents/guardians may wait in cars to avoid congregating at the entrance. Distancing markers will be placed outside the service where possible. Children will be brought straight to their specific care room on arrival.

Assigned duties for staff

As per recommendations it is likely that staff will be assigned to fix duties over this period as much as is possible. This could mean being allocated to a room, allocated to cleaning duties etc. It will not be possible to rotate such duties amongst others so as to avoid unnecessary cross over with other pods & staff.

Staff members temperature check

Each staff member will take their own temperature on arrival at work. Only temperatures higher than 38 degrees celsius need to be recorded. This will be recorded in your own record temperature COVID 19 pack. The manager or deputy manager will discuss further with the staff members and see if further steps will be required thereafter. We have an ample supply of hand sanitiser located throughout the building for use by staff and children if necessary.

Staff members hand hygiene & sneeze/cough etiquette

It is equally important that staff lead by example in relation to good hand hygiene & good sneeze/cough etiquette. The posters outlined above demonstrate the techniques required.

PPE for staff

We do have a supply of gloves & plastic aprons which can be utilised through the operation of your working day. We have also secured a supply of masks that be used by staff. We will, also distribute 2 cotton reusable facemasks to each staff member.

Each room will have their own stock of PPE.

The protocol for the use of masks are as follows:

A mask is recommended to be worn if you and another adult are not in a position to physical distance the required 2 metres. They are not recommended for any other part of your working day, however you may choose to wear same at other junctures throughout the day if you deem it to be necessary.

All masks should be used utilising good mask etiquette. We do have a training video on same which all staff should watch and follow the technique demonstrated.

The masks are personal protective equipment and as such are the responsibility of each staff member to wash and use in the correct manner as may be appropriate.

All sinks in the centre are facilitated with antic soap. We also have numerous hand sanitising stations spread throughout the building for staff to utilise through their working day.

Gloves may be worn by staff in the normal manner to facilitate nappy changing etc.. but staff may nominate to wear gloves throughout the day if desired. Please observe good hand hygiene even if you are wearing gloves.

Please note, as this is a global pandemic it is challenging to attain PPE on an ongoing basis. Please do not use such equipment flippantly and be aware of the challenges of attaining such equipment on an ongoing basis.

Touch points

We have hundreds of touch points throughout the building. Touch points are anything that a human hand may 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 however good hand hygiene will negate any risks associated with these touch points. It is probable that we will depend on both good hand hygiene and cleaning to ensure we negate any risks associated with these touch points.

However items that are exposed to droplets from the mouth or nose must be wiped cleaned with an appropriate disinfectant.

There are high personal use areas including the staff toilets that have been “noticed” of the obvious touch points and if you touch it you must clean it to protect you and your 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 & appropriate.

Wobblers & 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, particularly infants and toddlers, must be kept clean of secretions by careful and gentle washing.

Staff must ensure 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 clothes available to them in the service.

Individual **mouthing toys used for 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 are removed immediately after use. Such items must be sterilised in accordance with manufacturer's guidance. This will also apply to toys located in the room which children mouth. It is important to note manufacturers guidance on sterilising solution may have changed due to COVID-19. 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. Sleeping cots will be arranged to so that there is physical distance between groups of cots for children from different pods. If more than 1 play-pod are present in a sleep area/room there will be a distance of 2m 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 would have their own named cot or sleep bed/mat and own named bed linen. However if it is necessary that a cot (not a mattress) should be shared it will be disinfected between use of different children if applicable. Cleaning will be undertaken as follows:

- Cleaning of the cot frame
- Cleaning of the mattress
- Changing of the bed linen
- Labelling of the sleep equipment with the name(s) of the children who use the cot.

A record of when the bed linen was changed will 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 linen and the appropriate storage of clean bed linen.

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

Nappy Changing

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

Staff breaks

The staff room can now only accommodate up to 3 staff (including the working desk in the corner). Breaks will be staggered as much as possible however this current space may not be available to all during break times. It be necessary for some staff to take their break at their car. Some outdoor furnishings will also be provided to try and accommodate as many staff as is possible during break times. Staff's flexibility and consideration will be appreciated on 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 any unnecessary cross over of staff and children from various pods.

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

COVID 19 staff officers

Due to the size of our operation when fully operational it has been decided to appoint 2 COVID 19 officers to represent staff. This will assist in all aspects of communication. The two officers are advised on the notice board 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
- Payment enveloped
- Card payment over the phone

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

The administration / reception office is only accessible to administrative staff. Rostering for this area will, as much as is possible avoid having more than one administrator on at any one time. Should a staff member have to enter this area please be aware of your ability or lack there of to physical distance the required amount and utilise a mask if necessary.

Kitchen

The kitchen area is only available to kitchen staff assigned to same. It is not permissible for general staff to enter this area at any time during general operations (8.30am - 3pm).

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

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

Staff members within the kitchen area will maintain physical distance through the working day. There will be periods of required cross over during some operations and face masks must be worn during these times.

Distribution of food to the rooms

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

On opening the door to the room, all staff and children within the room should 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 already 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 within 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 this 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 a recommendation in this draft of this pandemic policy. There is no evidence to date of viruses that cause respiratory illnesses being transmitted via food or food packaging. Coronaviruses cannot multiply in food; they need an animal or human host to multiply.

General deliveries

General deliveries will be managed in a similar manner as described above. Deliveries, in general will be requested to be made in the afternoon/ evenings, avoiding the busier morning times.

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

Dish washer temperature

Dish Washer temperature must be taken daily and should be 60 degrees Celsius minimum. The same applies to the toy cleaning dish washer



Staff contact tracing form

It is a requirement under the pandemic regulations. This is to ensure efficient contact tracing should a case transpire at Scamps & Scholars. You must log individuals with whom you have been in close contact for 15 minutes or more with a physical distance of less than 2 metres or Closed Spaced Contact for 2 hours or more.

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

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

had symptoms of COVID-19 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

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

The contact racing 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 managers office at the end of each week where they will be stored securely.

Close contacts of travellers from High risk countries

If you are a close contact of someone who tested positive after arriving into Ireland from a high risk country, phone your GP. They will prioritise you for a COVID-19 test even though we are not currently testing close contacts in general.

Return to work form

All staff, a minimum of 3 days prior to returning to work must complete in full the return to work form. 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.

The form is titled 'Contact Tracing form' and includes fields for 'Employee Name', 'Dept', and 'Week Commencing'. Below these is a table with the following headers: 'Date', 'Time', 'Location', 'Names of contacts', 'Contact duration', and 'Note - less than 2m / confirmed space'. The table contains 10 empty rows for data entry.

The form is titled 'Killoglin Community Childcare Centre T/A Scamps & Scholars Childcare Centre Back to work assessment form COVID 19'. It contains five numbered questions with 'Yes' and 'No' checkboxes and a space for additional details:

- Do you have symptoms of cough, fever, high temperature, sore throat, runny nose, breathlessness or flu symptoms now or in the past 14 days?
- Have you been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection in the last 14 days?
- Are you a close contact of a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
- Have you been advised by a doctor to self isolate at this time?
- Have you been advised by a doctor to cocoon at this time?

At the bottom, there are fields for 'Signed staff member', 'Signed manager', and 'Date'.

Incident Plan / Response Plan

The following incident plan outlines actions to be taken should a child/staff member has or is suspected of having COVID-19.

The designated isolation area is the the play-house at the side of our premises. This 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 the staff member should monitor the person form the entrance to the area if possible.

The child should wear one of the child masks available. This room has some ventilation. Persons dealing with the child / adult who has suspected case of COVID must wear a minimum level of PPE which would be gloves, face mask &/or visor. Tissues will also be made available.

It is not advisable that another person would stay within the confines of the isolation room in such circumstances due to its restrictive size however in the case of a child it would be advisable to leave the door to this space open and for a staff member to remain visible in the entrance to this area. Privacy should be assured as much as is possible.

It is best, where possible that one staff member will deal with the child throughout this process. In the case of a child, constant reassurance must be provided by the staff member so that we don't make the child overly anxious. Once the child has been collected the area must be fully cleaned down with the products provided. It is optional to have the area fogged as well.

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 time & date. After this period of quarantine the same staff member must remove this bag into general waste.

Staff contact tracing form

It is a requirement under the pandemic regulations. This is to ensure efficient contact tracing should a case transpire at Scamps & Scholars. You must log individuals with whom you have been in close contact for 15 minutes or more with a physical distance of less than 2 metres or Closed Spaced Contact for 2 hours or more.

The sheet opposite 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 managers office at the end of each week where they will be stored securely.

Close contacts

Please remind all staff and parents that if they / their child have been told by the HSE services that they are a close contact of a case of Covid-19 and that they need to restrict their movements at home they will be offered testing, as soon as possible after they have been identified and then at day 10.

Once they are asymptomatic and have received their 'not detected' test result from day 10 test, they can stop restricting their movements and return.

However, if they are fully vaccinated and have no symptoms, they do not need to restrict their movements. The HSE will contact them and confirm this and state that they do not need to restrict their movements or undergo testing. In rare circumstances, the HSE may advise that they need to start restricting their movements and testing will be organised.

It is important that anyone who is a close contact is very aware of their symptoms. Those individuals must self-isolate and undergo testing should they develop any symptoms.

Testing (updated HSE - 27.09.2021)

An overview of the process is set out below for clarity:

Where there is a case in our service, the HSE will call you about the case (if they were infectious while in the setting) and will undertake contact tracing. If we are concerned that you have not heard from public health, we may call the HSE public health dedicated helpline for ELC/SAC services – 01-5119777

Following the call with public health, we will receive an email summarising the details and recommendations of who are designated close contacts. We will be required at this point to advise close contacts (parents of close contacts) that they need to restrict their movements and that they should await a call from the HSE who will provide further details, including in relation to testing.

The email from public health to us will include suggested text to share with parents/staff identified as close contacts, and will include the Day 10 test date that parents/staff will now need to know. This will be asked of parents when the HSE rings the parent to get further contact details and to book the test.

The email will also include some further information on important measures and messages which we may need to re-enforce within your service. There will also be an accompanying information sheet which we may send to families.

Finally, the email will advise us that a separate email will issue from the HSE Central Admin Team with a much simplified attached Excel template and instructions for completion and return.

Completion of the template that we receive from the Central Admin Team and we return as per instructions. We may contact the HSE Central Administration Team with the excel sheet attached directly on Hsecovid19schools@abtran.com and 021 4819351.

The HSE will ring the staff members/parents to take further details and book test dates.

Of note; Staff who are fully vaccinated and have no symptoms of Covid-19 or those who have recovered from Covid-19 in the last nine months may be advised immediately that they are not required to restrict their movements until the HSE contacts them.

HSE Testing centres are still operational but on an appointment basis.

This is in an effort to reduce queues at test centres and delays for people being tested. It also facilitates better management and grouping of results of close contacts in ELC / SAC services.

Staff with contact with a person who is seeking a Covid 19 test

If there is a staff member that has contact with a person who is awaiting testing they can stay at work if the following criteria is met:

(14.01.2022)

- If the staff member is double vaccinated / boosted
- If the staff member has no Covid 19 symptoms
- Is not immune compromised

Return to work form

All staff, a minimum of 3 days prior to returning to work must complete in full the return to work form. 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. absences

If any child is absent from the service it is imperative that parents / guardians notify the centre of the reason for such an absence.

The centre must be made aware of any COVID 19 tests that transpire for any child in the centre.

We will require a copy of the result which will be held in full compliance of data protection requirements.

Parents must ensure that children are following any exclusions as a result of any COVID 19 test.

After any test the centre insists on a child being excluded from the service for a minimum of 48 hours from receipt of a negative result.

Public health will indicate action required if the test proves positive.

A ***Return to Educational Facility declaration*** form must be completed by a parent / guardian before the child returns to the service.

Communication with Parents as Partners

We are obviously all aware of the new variant that is now common place in Ireland and is far more transmissible than the version that was prevalent last March. This new variant also seems somewhat more transmissible amongst children in comparison to the original strain of the virus.

Therefore we have to exercise **additional caution** in relation to any obvious signs that may be Covid related. The obvious symptoms are

dry cough

tiredness

Fever

Change in taste & smell

Below you can see the additional symptoms that are sometimes associated with Covid 19 and indeed compared with Flu & Colds.

Runny & stuffy nose is sometimes seen as a symptom for Covid now and we may choose to action this with contact with a parent.

<https://www2.hse.ie/>

Sneezing is not a common symptom of Covid 19. Runny & stuffy nose and sore throat can be symptoms for Covid 19, alongside the standard symptoms and we may action this with **contact** with the parent.

However 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 we have been already 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 are having informed communication with a parent regarding the current situation that we are presented with.

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

COVID 19 & flu & cold symptoms

Match the symptoms with the illness



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 doctors letter to state that the child is safe to return to the service.

For more long term conditions and symptoms associated with an ongoing condition such as asthma we will accept a doctors 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 symptoms that a child present with and make a judgement call on whether further action in partnership with the parent is required.

In the event of a **child who is suspected of having Covid 19 symptoms** the following is the protocol to follow:

This advice is for babies and children up to the end of primary school, usually the age of 12 or 13.

Children and babies can get coronavirus (COVID-19). But they seem to get it less often than adults and it's usually less serious. If a child becomes very unwell quickly, it's rare that they have coronavirus. Their symptoms may be because of another illness.

Parents should not send your child to Scamps & Scholars childcare if any of the following is true.

Your child has:

- a temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or more
- a new cough, loss or changed sense of taste or smell, or shortness of breath
- been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus
- been living with someone who is unwell and may have coronavirus
- an existing breathing condition that has recently got worse
- Runny or stuffy nose

In the absence of the availability of a PCR test for children aged from 4- 12 years old, the following is currently a permissible procedure to follow:

An antigen test can be carried out on day 1, day 2 & day 3. If any of these tests are positive you must seek a PCR test thereafter. If all 3 tests are negative and the child is symptom free for day 4 & 5 (not surpassed with calpol/nurofen or other) then they can return to the centre.

If any of these test are positive then the child must be deemed positive for Covid 19 and follow the HSE protocol thereafter.

If a child has symptoms at Scamps & Scholars

- Should any of the above instances occur at Scamps & Scholars then:
- the child should be taken to the isolation room (external playhouse in side carpark) by a staff members.
- The staff members should be wearing gloves, apron, a mask & visor.
- The door to the unit should be left open and the staff member can stay in the porch area unless it is necessary to be inside the unit to care for the child and monitor the child from there.
- The parents of the child should be called by another staff member and asked to collect the child.
- Clearance form their GP or other medical body for the child to return must be sought. The office should be wiped down with disinfectant and fogged once the child has left.

Advice for parents of a child that has Covid 19 symptoms:

Parents will need to:

- Isolate your child from other people - this means keeping them at home and completely avoiding contact with other people, as much as possible. Phone your GP - they will advise you if your child needs a Covid 19 test.
- Everyone that your child lives with should also restrict their movements at least until your child gets a diagnosis from their GP or a coronavirus test result. This means not going to school, childcare or work.
- Parents should treat their child at home for the symptoms.

Your child should only leave your home to have a test or to see your GP.

Follow the advice on what to do if your child:

- is given another diagnosis by your GP
- is not tested and is also not given another diagnosis from your GP
- tests positive for coronavirus
- tests negative for coronavirus

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 symptoms of coronavirus, but they could be a sign of another infection. 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.

Keep an eye on your child's symptoms for 48 hours. After 48 hours it's usually okay to send your child back to school or childcare 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

Diarrhoea

If your child has diarrhoea, they should stay at home and not go to school until they have not had diarrhoea 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 'green list'. This means 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.

Children who are close contacts of someone who has coronavirus

If your child has symptoms, follow the advice on keeping your child at home - isolate your child, phone your GP, and restrict your movements.

If your child has no symptoms but has been in close contact with someone who has coronavirus, they should:

- restrict their movements for 14 days - this includes not going to this centre
- get tested for coronavirus - your GP can arrange this

They should do this even if they feel 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 had close contact with a case will have 2 tests for coronavirus. This is because it can take up to 14 days for the virus to show up in your system after you have been exposed to it.

The second test will be 7 days after their last contact with the person who has coronavirus. If this is close to when they had their first test, they will only have 1 test.

When it's okay to send your child to childcare

As long as your child has not been in close contact with someone who has the virus, it's usually okay to send them to school or childcare if they:

- only has a sneeze
- do not have a temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or more (as long as their temperature has not 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 coronavirus
- have been told by a GP that their illness is caused by something else, that is not coronavirus. Your GP will tell you when they can return to school or childcare.
- have got a not detected ('negative') coronavirus test result and have not had symptoms for 48 hours
- have not had diarrhoea for 48 hours

Children who are close contacts of someone who has coronavirus should follow the advice to restrict their movements.

Your child does not need a GP medical certification or a note from a GP to return to school. But their school may ask you to sign a form to say that your child is well enough to attend. This is called a Return To Educational Facility Parental Declaration Form (PDF, 1 page, 95KB).

Sneezing

You do not need to restrict your child's movements if the only symptoms they have are:

- sneezing

They can continue to go to this childcare centre if these are the only symptoms they have.

If your child has a high temperature and any other symptoms of Covid 19, isolate your child and phone your GP. You should also restrict your movements.

Most of the time, you do not need to phone your GP if sneezing is your child's only symptom. Talk to your pharmacist instead.

Sneezing on its own is more likely to be symptoms of a cold or other viral infection.

Children and testing

Your GP will decide if your child needs a test for coronavirus.

They will usually need a test if they have:

- been in close contact with someone who has the virus
- common symptoms of coronavirus
- been in contact with someone who has symptoms

They may also need a test if they are admitted to hospital for any illness.

It is important that those accompanying the person with suspected COVID 19 would remain at a 2 metro distance throughout.

The COVID-19 manager/response team should initially assess whether the unwell individual can immediately be directed to go home, call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home.

Where that is not possible, the unwell individual should remain in the isolation area and call their doctor, outlining their current symptoms. They should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. Advice should be given to the unwell individual to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bag provided.

The COVID-19 response team should notify management and arrange transport home or hospital for medical assessment. Public transport of any kind should not be used. The COVID-19 response team may be contacted by the HSE to discuss the case. When contacted by the HSE, the COVID-19 response team should use the records kept regarding Direct Contact (contact tracing form) to identify people who have been in contact with the individual.

The HSE may advise on any actions or precautions that should be taken. See below for detail on review of response to confirmed case.

The COVID-19 response team should carry out an assessment of the incident, which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery. Advice on the management of staff and workplace will be based on this assessment. See Annex A for guidance on risk assessment.

The HSE will also be in contact with the case directly to advise on isolation and identifying other contacts and will be in touch with any contacts of the case to provide them with appropriate advice. Immediate action following a suspected case should include closure of the isolation area until appropriately cleaned.

Contact with confirmed cases

If a confirmed case is identified in your workplace, staff who have had confirmed **close** contact will be advised of the case. If the other staff members are symptom free they can attend work as normal.

Staff shortages

As an organisation we are aware that we will have staff that will not be able to attend work on various occasions due to having to self isolate.

With this in mind Scamps & Scholars have made several additional appointments of staff members to our team and we are hopeful that we will be able to operate the service at full capacity on an ongoing basis.

That being said, it is possible that we may encounter periods where we will have a diminished level of staffing within the centre.

Should such circumstances prevail and in the event that we are unable to maintain the legal ratios of Early Years Educators to children, it may be necessary that a closure of a room or rooms will be required in the interim.

We will advise parents of such an outcome with as much notice as we can give but it should be acknowledged that such an outcome could occur with little notice.

Sand, Rice & Mala Play

These three play items will see children involved in mix play and as such new protocols will be required to ensure we meet the challenge that brings in relation to Covid 19.

Each room will schedule these play experiences in advance weekly and once the play event has been completed the product, sand rice or malt will be quarantined for a minimum of 72 hours. There after the product may be utilised again following the same procedures.

The normal turnover and replacement of these products will apply.

The sand pit in the from area will be fully raked by staff after their group leaves the area.

Fogging Machine

Scamps & Scholars will be utilising a fogging disinfectant machine to enhance our disinfectant regime. It is probable that this unit will be utilised on a regular basis to enhance disinfection across the service.

Staff leave of absence due to Covid 19

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

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

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

1. Covid 19 situations that arise outside of Scamps & Scholars

Should a staff member have to self isolate due to either symptoms that are aligned with Covid 19 or a close contact with someone who has Covid 19 (Self-isolation means staying indoors and completely avoiding contact with other people) then Scamps & Scholars will support that staff member in executing the following options:

- Utilising their sick days inline with the sick pay contract agreement
- In the absence of sick days being available to use, taking holidays to cover those days
- If you receive an official instruction to stay at home from your GP or medical professional or from the HSE, you should obtain a medical certificate (by phone) and sign up for the enhanced Covid-19 illness benefit available through the state for COVID-19. Scamps & Scholars will assist where necessary in this process. You cannot adopt this scheme until your sick days have been utilised first.
- Lieu time may also be utilised with agreement of the manager.

2. Covid 19 situations that arise at Scamps & Scholars

Should circumstances arise where there is a Covid 19 concern emanates from Scamps & Scholars and through public health, staff are requested to be tested and or self isolate the following criteria will apply:

As you are aware, 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 14 days. This means that it is possible that staff assigned to this room will be instructed to stay at home for this period. In these circumstances only, the following will apply:

- You should obtain a medical certificate (by phone) and sign up for the enhanced Covid-19 illness benefit available through the state for COVID-19.
- You must opt for this payment to be made “to the employer”.
- The Company will top up this payment to your normal pay for the full 2 week absence period (5 working days per week).
- The Company will top up to full pay for up to a maximum of 3 of these 14 day absences, so up to a maximum of 6 weeks, when instructed by the Company not to attend for work.
- This is in addition to your contractual 7 days sick pay.
- The company will not top up any social welfare payment in the absence of a sick cert which clearly denotes a Covid 19 absence.

3. Enhance Illness Benefit

If a staff member is requested by the HSE to self isolate due to being Covid positive then in such circumstances, Scamps will pay the staff member the full wage amount as long as the staff member applies for the enhanced illness benefit available for such circumstances and repays this amount to scamps and Scholars in due course. Staff must demonstrate the need to self isolate. A text message or an email from the HSE will suffice and Scamps & Scholars will accept same in lieu of a medical certificate.

Mask wearing in the 9 years & over cohort

- All children 9 years and over (primarily Rascals - 3rd to 6th class) must wear a mask on the bus to and from school.
- The same age cohort must wear a mask while in the centre while engaged in any static activity (homework, board games etc.)
- Any activity that is outside - no mask required unless they choose to wear it themselves
- Any sporting activity - no mask required unless they choose to wear it themselves
- Any child that has medical difficulties in breathing - no mask required unless they choose to wear it themselves

Approval Date: _____

Implementation Date: _____

Signed: _____
(On behalf of the Board of Directors)

Appendix 1:

Drop off & collection points

Here's how our facility is laid out...

