



Saint Joseph's Primary School

**Positive Behaviour Policy COVID-19 Addendum:
Guidance and Addendum**

August 2020

COVID-19 has significantly impacted on society as a whole, the impact of the virus and lockdown restrictions have been widely recognised as potentially traumatising experiences. Potentially the whole school community could be affected by these experiences, i.e. staff/pupils/parents/guardians.

Safeguarding permeates all aspects of school life, and we ensure that this Guidance is read in conjunction with our Special Educational Needs Policy, Child Protection and suite of Safeguarding Policies.

Section A:

Taking a ‘Trauma Informed Approach’ to Education Restart will support the whole school community

Understanding and Responding to Trauma

Trauma affects us all, directly or indirectly. Many people live with the ongoing effects of past and present overwhelming stress – trauma. Despite the large numbers of people affected, many of us often don’t think of the possibility that someone we meet, speak with or support may have experienced trauma. This makes us less likely to recognise it. Keeping the possibility of trauma on our radar means keeping the sensitivities and vulnerabilities of people who may be trauma survivors in mind. It means being respectful, acknowledging and understanding.

Having a basic understanding of how stress can affect any of us can help this process. Knowing this will make us less likely to fuel other people’s stress levels. This means paying attention to the way we engage with other people, as well as to ‘what’ we do. It also means thinking about what may have *happened* to someone, rather than judging what is ‘wrong’ with them.

Our interactions with one another are always important. They are especially important for people living with the impacts of trauma. Trauma interrupts the connections between different systems of functioning in the brain. People recover from trauma when disruptions between different levels of functioning – physical, emotional and cognitive (thinking) – become connected or ‘integrated’ again.

It is important to understand that:

- **positive experiences in our relationships can help us heal**
- **negative experiences make our emotional and psychological problems worse**

We should not underestimate the capacity of positive interactions, even in routine interactions, to be soothing and validating. This applies to all of us and especially to those with trauma histories. Support is crucial to the process of recovery and will ensure that re-traumatisation does not occur.

Positive experiences of relationships are central to trauma recovery. They are also important to general well-being. By employing trauma-informed principles, we can build a ‘trauma-informed’ society. This creates possibilities for psychological and physical healing on a grand scale.

Predictability

Creating a sense of predictability is a priority – the human brain is designed for predictability, this is what helps us to feel safe and able to settle to learn/engage cognitively. Our nervous system does not respond positively to the uncertainty and the unpredictability that COVID-19 brought and the uncertainty around being able to make plans for the future (short-term or long-term) is one of the key factors as to why mental health has been impacted so significantly. It is important to let the members of our school community know that our planning and timetables will be kept as consistent and predictable as possible and we as a school will try as best we can to follow the normal routines and curriculum requirements per the Northern Ireland Curriculum document.

Connection

Our ability to connect with one another has been deeply impacted by the COVID-19. Humans are fundamentally social beings and a major buffer for our mental health is our sense of connection with others. Within trauma research, COVID-19 has been described a 'paradoxical challenge' to our nervous system; when we are feeling under threat our 'normal' response is to connect with others, but with social distancing etc. we are hampered in activating this coping strategy. Online activity, the main source of connection throughout COVID-19, has been helpful to a point, but it does not provide the same attunement that face to face interactions do. The aim of such interactions is to seek a shared experience which is much harder to achieve online.

Consistent use of the following strategies will promote connectedness:

- Class teachers /key adults need to be involved in **face to face return meetings** with pupils
- For pupils within the 'vulnerable category' regular **connection time** needs to be maintained, <https://www.educationni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Guidance%20on%20Vulnerable%20Children%20and%20Young%20People.pdf>
- Social interactions regulate physiology and promote health and restoration, so identify and teach any replacement behaviours that will be required e.g. "Instead of hugging we now tap toes" or, "For meet and greet we touch elbows"
- Ensure that the emphasis is on **physical distance rather than social distance**, consideration must also be given to social and emotional 'connection' time, with each other and with staff.

Communication and Information

In order to create feelings of safety and connection, communication needs to be clear and accessible. We need to rethink our responses to behaviours that seem inappropriate or challenging in light of the fact that COVID-19 has created a 'trauma environment' for everyone, consider these key areas that the school community may now have heightened anxiety around:

- feeling safe, physically and emotionally
- being in physical proximity to others
- physical contact

Clear communication is needed to explain how such anxieties are being navigated by school, with opportunities for fears to be shared and discussion as to how they can be alleviated. This communication needs to be ongoing and reciprocal.

Here in St Joseph's Ballycruttle, we will be continuing our normal routine of PDMU (Personal Development and Mutual Understanding) lessons, Grow in Love (R.E.) lessons, Pupil of the week/month, weekly Compliment lists, positive behaviour strategy use and positive pastoral care opportunities and promotion on a daily and weekly basis. We will continue to use various means of communication such as Seesaw, Website, Facebook page, School App, school text service, letters and newsletters in order to keep in touch with our parents and families. We will also bring in professional bodies if required in order to enhance our curriculum such as the 'Healthy Me' programme which is happening on Tuesday 29th September.

Emotional Health and Well-Being

Safe, Seen, Soothed

In order to make wellbeing a priority, our focus will be on helping the whole school community to feel safe, seen and soothed. This will be particularly important for those who have not felt safe during COVID-19 restrictions. **Safe** can be achieved through predictability, communication and connection as discussed. **Seen** can be achieved through dedicated face to face time and a willingness to listen and see things from the other person's perspective. **Soothed** can be achieved by understanding behaviour within a trauma framework and first responses to behaviour will be focussed upon co-regulation, rather than consequences.

Connect before Correct

Remember that behaviour needs to be understood and responded to within a COVID-19/Trauma Informed Practice framework. Dr. Bruce Perry, an influential neuroscientist within the field of trauma, recommends that first we should help the pupil to **regulate** and calm their fight/flight/freeze responses. Then we need to **relate** and connect through an attuned and sensitive relationship before attempting to **reason**, i.e. support reflection, learning/remembering a more appropriate alternative to the behaviour.

Movement ('Mobilisation' within a trauma framework)

Greater priority will be given to movement and activities that involve rhythm and creativity. This will help reduce some of the 'numbing' that occurred during COVID-19 restrictions, again particularly relevant in terms of excess screen time, video gaming etc. and lack of interpersonal interactions. Movement breaks will be scheduled regularly, all pupils and staff will benefit from greater access to exercise, dance, music, mindfulness etc. during their school day. A tool used for this in St Joseph's is 'Go Noodle'. Go noodle can also be accessed from home on: <https://www.gonoodle.com/>

"Stress Brake"

The impact of significant disruption to everyday life and ongoing uncertainty, means that minor everyday stressors that we previously would have managed can now overwhelm our ability to cope, this can reinforce feelings of stress and create a very negative cycle. Therefore, we need to be ready to be the ones to pull the 'stress brake' for pupils and colleagues:

- take a preventative approach, identify and respond to early stress signals
- be ready to provide greater support for tasks or challenges that the individual would previously have managed independently and have flexible expectations.

Section B:

COVID-19: Addendum to Positive Behaviour Policy

The principles as set out in St Joseph's P.S. Positive Behaviour Policy remain and should continue to be followed. This addendum is not intended to be used as a stand-alone document and therefore should be read in conjunction with the existing policy. It sets out the expectations of St Joseph's P.S. in response to the COVID-19 guidance and the need for the whole school community to adjust to this guidance upon return to school. The new guidance will describe how the school community will be supported to adhere to the new procedures and routines outlined in the addendum.

This addendum follows the guidance provided by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/landing-pages/education-restart>

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

The return to school will see some significant changes to the structure of the school day, daily routines and social and behavioural norms. There is an awareness that COVID-19 has potentially impacted significantly on the mental health and wellbeing of staff, pupils and their family members due to the experiences that they may have had during the lockdown period.

To ensure that our school continues to be a calm, nurturing and supportive learning environment, it is essential that new routines and expectations are established for the safety of the whole school community.

Addendum Guiding Principles – A Trauma Informed Approach

Clear communication will support and build their confidence and re-establish a sense of familiarity

–We continue to have appropriate and effective measures in place for communicating and involving pupils regarding their expected behaviour upon returning to school. These will include, online materials, social stories and other means. Communication will be tailored to be age-appropriate and take account of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Expectations for behaviour will be clear - We will teach pupils that they have a responsibility to keep themselves and others safe, physically and emotionally. We will apply our expectations consistently and fairly so that pupils know the consequences of their behaviours and support will be provided to ensure all pupils are able to meet these expectations.

Routines and behaviours will be taught - Routines and expectations for behaviour will be taught and modelled by all. Our aim is to support the school community in a trauma informed way, therefore **first and foremost behaviour will be seen as communication**. Behaviour that challenges is not seen as a choice, but as communication of an unmet need. The school community will strive to understand the function behind the behaviour and offer support.

Supporting emotional health and wellbeing - We will seek to reconnect and rebuild relationships and focus on the emotional health and wellbeing of the school community by promoting connection and communication, predictability and providing opportunities for movement before focussing on the academic curriculum.

Mutually respectful relationships are key - Relationships, showing empathy and feeling safe will continue to be prioritised.

Parents/guardians will be kept fully informed - We will continue to nurture close relationships and ensure that appropriate and effective measures are in place for communicating the new system in place around the behavioural changes expected upon return to school. The school will encourage parents/guardians to share concerns and we will respond.

A proactive and supportive approach will be taken - we will look at patterns of behaviour and anticipate risks, we will continue to update/implement Risk Reduction Action Plans as required, to support pupils.

Behaviour for Learning

We will celebrate the resilience of pupils in how they deal with the demands of Education Restart. It is important to continue to praise and reward the expected behaviour within school.

There are occasions when behaviours which are neither safe nor conducive to learning occur. In order to promote positive behaviour, the school community will seek to reduce tension and anxiety by actively promoting de-escalation strategies.

To support pupils' reintegration a range of supports will be implemented consistently across the whole school, proportionately and fairly:

- *emotion coaching, i.e. talking with a pupil calmly about their feelings and behaviour and discussing strategies that could help, goal is to empathise, reassure and teach*
- *supporting pupils to assess their learning progress, gaps and requirements as a result of school closures and blended learning;*
- *offering time to reflect and plan for better choices*

New Procedures and Routines

Our Parents have already received guidance on how St Joseph's will work on opening in August 2020. See documentation below or contact the school if you have any questions or queries.

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/landing-pages/education-restart>

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

Guidance has been provided on the following areas:

- *social distancing- Pupils will be kept one metre apart and will remain in their class bubbles as much as physically possible within our school settings and facilities.*

- *space utilisation; Each class will remain in their own bubble and eat their lunch/hot meal in their classroom. Outside in the playground these bubbles will be kept in different areas as far as physically possible and in relation to staffing levels. Pupils will move around the school in a one-way system and will only allowed to enter the bathroom facilities two at a time (same bubble) or one at a time (separate bubbles). Posters and ground markings will be used to indicate where pupils should wait/queue.*
- *Altered routines for arrival and departure: P1-3 children use the new back entrance gate to queue on the red lines one metre apart and wait for their class teacher to collect them each morning at 9am. They also leave through this gate at 2pm. P.4-5 and P.6-7 enter through the new front side gate with P.4-5 entering at 9am and P.6-7 entering at 8.50am. The children must wait with their families until the appropriate time for their class group and then line up on the socially distanced lines at the gate. P6-7 leave through this gate at 2.50pm and P4-5 leave through this gate at 3pm. Once pupils have been collected by their families they should not mix family groups within school grounds e.g. in the trampoline area. Guidance recommends parents/guardians are to remain outside the school gates where possible and are encouraged not to congregate at the school gates as a means of preventing the spread of the virus. Family groupings should not be mixing on school grounds. Please see the Restart Guidance link above for further details.*

New rules and routines to promote reassurance and safety for all regarding hygiene

Each classroom will contain their own cleaning pack. Sanitising units have been placed at each entrance gate and each entrance/exit door. The children will use these on entry or exit.

The children will have access to soap and water to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds and will do so on the following occasions:

- On arrival
- Before break time-*before eating*
- After break time
- Before lunch time-*before eating*
- After lunch time
- After using the toilet
- Where hands are dirty
- Before leaving at home time
- After coughing or sneezing (catch it, bin it, kill it approach) Good respiratory hygiene will be explained to the children.

Children will be discouraged from touching their eyes, face, nose or mouth and will be shown how to cough into their elbow if they don't have a tissue/paper towel. If they have a tissue/paper towel, they will be shown how to cough into it and then dispose safely of it into the nearest bin and immediately wash their hands. Please encourage your child/ren to practise the hand washing technique in the home.

- *Symptoms of the virus: Please see the leaflet provided by the Education Restart Programme*

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS & CARERS

Everyone has a role to play in keeping our schools safe and helping to stop the spread of COVID-19.

DON'T SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL IF THEY HAVE COVID-19 SYMPTOMS.

VISIT [NIDIRECT.GOV.UK/ CORONAVIRUS](https://nidirect.gov.uk/coronavirus) TO BOOK A TEST ONLINE. CALL 119 IF YOU CANNOT BOOK A TEST ONLINE.

YOU SHOULD BOOK A COVID-19 TEST IF YOUR CHILD HAS:

A HIGH TEMPERATURE

This means they feel hot to touch on their chest or back (you do not need to measure their temperature).

OR

A NEW CONTINUOUS COUGH

This means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if they usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual).

OR

A LOSS OR CHANGE TO THEIR SENSE OF SMELL OR TASTE

This means they've noticed they cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

IF YOUR CHILD DOES NOT HAVE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19 BUT HAS OTHER COLD-LIKE SYMPTOMS, SUCH AS A RUNNY NOSE, THEY DO NOT NEED TO BE TESTED AND THEY OR MEMBERS OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD DO NOT NEED TO SELF-ISOLATE. YOUR CHILD CAN ATTEND SCHOOL IF FIT TO DO SO.

HERE'S WHAT TO DO IF:

YOUR CHILD HAS COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

WHAT TO DO?

- DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL
- Book a COVID-19 test
- Household self-isolates
- Inform school immediately about test result

WHEN CAN MY CHILD RETURN?

Your child can return to school if the test is negative providing they are well enough, have not had a fever for 48 hours and if they haven't been advised to self-isolate by the PHA Contact Tracing Service.

YOUR CHILD TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

WHAT TO DO?

- DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL
- Inform school immediately about test result
- Self-isolate for at least 10 days as advised by the PHA.

WHEN CAN MY CHILD RETURN?

Your child can return to school after 10 days even if they still have a cough / loss of smell or taste. These symptoms can last for several weeks.

SOMEBODY IN MY HOUSEHOLD HAS COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

WHAT TO DO?

- DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL
- The household member should book a COVID-19 test
- Household self-isolates
- Inform school immediately about test result

WHEN CAN MY CHILD RETURN?

Your child can return to school if the symptomatic household member's test is negative and if they haven't been advised to self-isolate by the PHA Contact Tracing Service.

SOMEBODY IN MY HOUSEHOLD TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

WHAT TO DO?

- DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL
- Inform school immediately about test result

WHEN CAN MY CHILD RETURN?

Your child can return to school when they have completed 14 days of self-isolation without any symptoms*.

CONTACT TRACING HAS IDENTIFIED MY CHILD AS A CLOSE CONTACT

WHAT TO DO?

- DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL
- Self-isolate for at least 14 days as advised by the PHA Contact Tracing Service

WHEN CAN MY CHILD RETURN?

Your child can return to school when they have completed 14 days of self-isolation without any symptoms*.

YOUR CHILD HAS BEEN IN CONTACT WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS A CLOSE CONTACT

WHAT TO DO?

- Attend school as normal
- If your child does not have any COVID-19 symptoms they should carry on with normal activities.

YOUR CHILD HAS TRAVELLED ABROAD AND HAS TO SELF-ISOLATE

WHAT TO DO?

- DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL
- Self-isolate for 14 days in line with quarantine advice

WHEN CAN MY CHILD RETURN?

Your child can return to school when they have completed 14 days of self-isolation without any symptoms*.

*If your child has been identified as a close contact of a case of COVID-19, or has returned from travel abroad and is self-isolating, they must self-isolate for 14 days regardless of a negative COVID-19 test result.

Further information, including Frequently Asked Questions for Parents and Carers, can be found on the Department of Education's website at www.education-ni.gov.uk

EDUCATION RESTART



- Bringing items to school, sharing equipment or other items including drinking bottles- No school bags are to be brought into school. Pupils can use a disposable plastic bag to carry lunch items or a washable/wipe able lunch bag in order to protect both home and school from the virus. Disposable water bottles or wipe able reusable bottles can be taken in. Please ensure

any item that are re-usable will be cleansed each day before coming back into school. Rattan style bags are not appropriate as they are not easily cleaned on a daily basis and are not disposable.

- Pupils must refrain from coughing or spitting at or towards another person. If this occurs and it is deemed purpose ably done- the school behaviour policy will be referred to and sanctions applied.*
- There will be clear rules for pupil conduct during remote learning if/when this occurs. Please see the remote learning policy.*
- There is signs, posters and visual prompts which are age appropriate displayed throughout the school as reminders of the new safety measures in place*
- If any child has any concerns, we have a worry box, school buddies, school staff and a school council in which they can communicate with and we will ensure their concerns will be heard and responded to*
- Arrangements will be made for pupils who are 'clinically vulnerable' and who must learn from home if this is required.*
- Pupils who require additional support to follow the expectations will be provided with support through the Code of Practice and the Special Educational Needs Policy will be implemented and reasonable adjustments made.*

Emotional Health and Wellbeing

A whole-school approach will be taken to promote emotional health and wellbeing and will involve all members of the school community actively working together in partnership to achieve this outcome through delivery of the curriculum by:

- creating an environment where pupils and staff feel safe and happy;*
- providing opportunities for pupils to build self-esteem, develop confidence and cope with change;*
- supporting the development of emotional literacy and resilience to help pupils understand and find ways to promote their own health and wellbeing;*
- lesson planning;*
- talks/discussions;*
- promoting small group work within their bubble, 1:1, peer-mentoring, team building;*
- providing wellbeing through PDMU discussions, Grow in love, Healthy Me programme etc;*
- raising awareness of how and where support can be accessed*
- developing supportive networks and promoting self-care.*

Support: Reasonable Adjustments

At certain stages in a child's or young person's school life they may struggle to access, or manage within, the typical provision offered by the school as a result of:

- Social, Behavioural, Emotional and Well-Being Needs (SBEW) and/or;
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

School staff will be supported by the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) to implement the school's Special Educational Needs Policy and be guided by existing/new Individual Education Plans/Education, Health and Care Plans.

Reasonable adjustments may include, but are not limited to:

- *preparing pupils for new routines, this could include a visit to the school/video/visuals/leaflet etc.*
- *identification of a key member of staff to act as point of contact who will provide support when needed*
- *additional support at break and lunch time*
- *adapted resources*
- *liaising with EA Support Services, e.g. Autism Advisory and Intervention Service, Psychology Service, Primary/Post-Primary Behaviour Support & Provisions*
- *liaising with external agencies as appropriate e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Social Services, Health and Social Care Trust, Family Support Hub.*

Responding to ongoing concerns together with the pupil:

- review, amend and implement support strategies and, through consultation with school staff and parent/guardian, agree a plan which is in line with Special Needs Code of Practice and the school's Special Educational Needs Policy
- if appropriate, complete a Risk Assessment and develop a Risk Reduction Action Plan (RRAP). This should be drafted in consultation with staff, pupil, parent/guardian and supporting agencies to identify and target support to address the presenting SBEW
- address serious health-related issues of non-adherence to COVID-19 measures, such as coughing and spitting at others through the implementation of a RRAP

Suspension and Expulsion:

When appropriate support has been implemented, monitored and reviewed but a pupil's SBEW continues to cause significant risk to self or others in the school community, a short period of suspension may be considered to allow time for a Risk Assessment and the development of an appropriate RRAP. As part of a planned return to school following a suspension, parents/guardians will be requested to attend a meeting with the Principal (or their representative) to agree the implementation of the RRAP. If, when all appropriate supports and guidance have been implemented and reviewed, a pupil continues to be unable to follow the safety rules, the Principal may, consider

alternative arrangements to formally suspend a pupil for a fixed period or, as a last resort, move towards expulsion proceedings

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/suspensions-and-expulsions>

Note, suspension should therefore be considered only after:

2.1a period of indiscipline

The school will maintain a written record of events and of the interventions of teachers, contacts with parent / guardian and any requests for external support from the EA's Education Welfare Service, Educational Psychology Service or other applicable EA services; and / or

2.2a serious incident of indiscipline

The school will have investigated and documented the incident. The investigation will include an opportunity for the pupil to be interviewed and for his or her version of events to be given before any decision to suspend is made.

Extract from Approved EA Scheme: <https://www.eani.org.uk/publications/school-document/2015-0513-approved-ea-scheme-for-the-suspension-and-expulsion-of>

NB. There is a statutory requirement for schools to arrange for the provision of suitable education for registered pupils of the school when they are suspended, regardless of the length of suspension or reason for the sanction.

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201125-education-suspended-pupils>

Safe handling: Use of Physical Intervention

In the present COVID-19 circumstances while it is unlikely that school staff would choose to use physical intervention, there may be times when physical intervention is deemed necessary as per Article 4 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, enabling a member of staff to prevent a pupil from: a. committing an offence; b. causing personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil himself); or c. engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among any of its pupils, whether during a teaching session or otherwise. See the Regional Policy Framework on the Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/regional-policy-framework-use-reasonable-forcesafehandling>

Saint Joseph's P.S. will be guided by the above principles during COVID-19 circumstances and acting in line with the school's Safe Handling Policy, staff will:

- be aware of possible risk of infection if they physically intervene, contrasted with the risk of not intervening*
- act in accordance with Public Health and Government guidelines on COVID-19*
- focus on early intervention as a preventative measure alongside de-escalation strategies and reducing 'triggers' to manage risk*

- *only use physical intervention as **a last resort**, ensuring that their actions are reasonable and proportionate and in the best interests of the pupil*
- *continue to explore alternatives that maximise safety and minimise harm when risky behaviours occur*
- *maintain accurate records of physical intervention according to the school's Reasonable Force/Safe Handling Policy*
- *act to maintain the care, welfare, safety and security of all members of the school community*

New procedures and routines: Tracking and monitoring arrangements

Regularly collect data to review how effectively the new routines and procedures are being implemented and embedded, e.g. new entry and exit arrangements, RRAPs are working effectively, one-way systems are being used, maintenance of social bubbles.

Invite regular feedback from staff and pupils (School Council) to inform practice and guide adjustments to procedures and routines and make improvements as appropriate.

Useful links

Legislation/DE Guidance:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/landing-pages/education-restart>

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

Well-being and Mental Health information:

<https://youngminds.org.uk/>

<https://www.place2be.org.uk/our-services/services-for-schools/mental-health-resources-for-schools/return-to-school-resources/>

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/take-5-steps-wellbeing-english-and-11-translations>