



Coláiste Pobail Acla

## Health and Safety Policy

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**NOTE: Please refer to Appendix 10 and Appendix 11 for information regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, our COVID-19 Response Plan is available to view on our website; [www.colaiSTEPobaila.ie](http://www.colaiSTEPobaila.ie)**

## **1. Responsibilities**

### **1.1. Responsibilities of the Board of Management**

The Board recognises and accepts its statutory responsibilities and its obligations as an employer to direct, manage and achieve in so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of every employee, pupil and visitor alike. This policy is designed to cater for all people equally and does not discriminate on the grounds of race, family status, religious belief, membership of the Traveller community, political opinion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, marital status or age. The Board will be responsible for ensuring that adequate financial and physical resources are provided to deal adequately with occupational health and safety issues as they arise. The Board may be requested or request to review specific issues during the year as the need arises.

### **1.2. Responsibilities of the Principal as Safety Officer**

The Principal has executive responsibility for the day to day management and co-ordination of all occupational health and safety matters in the school in accordance with the health and safety policy agreed by the Board. The Principal is responsible for the following:

- Liaising with the Board on policy issues and any problems in implementing the health and safety policy.
- Carrying out statutory reporting of accidents to the Health and Safety Authority
- Ensuring that issues raised by staff on potential hazards are investigated and acted upon appropriately to remove or reduce the hazard to an acceptable level.
- Ensuring that safety precautions are implemented when employing outside contractors.
- Ensuring that all staff members have access to the Safety Statement.
- Provide information for the safety of new employees; bring to their attention the Safety Statement and their own responsibilities to their employer.
- Ensuring that all staff are aware that an Accident Report Form must be completed for all accidents and that all accidents are investigated.
- Ensuring that all first aid kits/equipment is fully stocked and up to date.
- Ensuring that relevant documentation is circulated among members of the school community.
- To ensure that the names of the following be displayed in the staff room:
  - The Safety Officer
  - The Safety Representative
  - Members of the Safety Committee
  - Qualified First Aiders

### **1.3. Responsibilities of the Deputy Principal**

- Keep up to date on the duties imposed on the school and its employees by Health and Safety Legislation and advise the Principal as Safety Officer, of any changes to same.
- Ensure that the Safety Statement is reviewed on an annual basis.
- Ensure that sound and safe work practices are observed at all times.
- Ensure that Fire Safety Policy is followed at all times including that regular fire drills take place and that a review of each drill and associated evacuation procedures is carried out. Any problems in this area should be brought to the attention of the Principal as Safety Officer.
- Brief staff on fire drill protocols.
- Arrange that all students are briefed on fire drill protocols.
- Devise and implement a system for ensuring that visitors and contractors are informed of Fire Safety Policy.
- Devise an evacuation and verification process for visitors and contractors.
- Arrange staff supervision rota of students to ensure their safety.
- Arrange relevant staff in-service in health and safety as appropriate.

### **1.4. Responsibilities of the Safety Committee**

The Safety Committee is made up of representatives of teachers, S.N.A.'s and ancillary staff. The committee has responsibility for:

- Consulting with and advising the Principal and Deputy Principal on safety matters in the school.
- Monitoring all aspects of safety and health in the workplace.
- Ensuring that the Safety Policy is implemented.
- Meet H.S.A. Inspectors on visits to the school when required.
- Make recommendations on amendments to the Safety Statement.

### **1.5. Responsibilities of Teachers**

Teachers are responsible for the day to day management of health and safety in the classroom and other areas of the school. Teachers should highlight classroom safety rules and Health and Safety rules in the classroom to their students, particularly in practical subject classrooms, and in relation to dress code as it relates to classroom safety. The responsibilities of teachers include:

- Promoting an interest in and enthusiasm for health and safety issues.
- Taking reasonable care of his/her own safety/health and welfare and that of any other person who may be affected by his/her own acts or omissions while at work.
- To ensure that working environments are clean, tidy and safe.
- Carrying out regular inspections to ensure the classroom/work area is adequate, in regard to health, safety and welfare and passing on this information to the Principal.

- To report to the Principal without unreasonable delay, any defects in equipment, place of work or system of work, which might endanger safety, health or welfare, of which he/she becomes aware of.
- Ensuring that any measures identified as necessary by the risk assessments are fully implemented as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- Enforcing rules of conduct as outlined in the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Investigating, recording and reporting incidents/accidents that occur in their domain, as detailed in the School Incident Reporting Procedure.
- Ensuring students involved in accidents receive first aid or medical attention as required.
- Adequately supervising, instructing, informing and training students to enable them to participate in school activities safely.
- Wearing and ensuring that all students wear personal protective clothing/equipment and apparel as appropriate.
- Taking a full and active part in all training for safety that the school organises.
- Actively participate in all fire drills and implement fully agreed protocols.
- Record all incidents/accidents on Accident Report Form.

### **1.6. Responsibilities of Special Needs Assistants**

Special Needs Assistants have responsibilities towards the students in their care. Their responsibilities include the following:

- Taking reasonable care for his/her own safety, health and welfare and that of any other person who may be affected by his/her acts or omissions while at work.
- Ensuring that equipment, furniture and the work environment are suitable for the tasks undertaken and the needs of the individual.
- To report to the teacher without unreasonable delay any defect in equipment, place of work or system of work, which might endanger safety, health or welfare, of which he/she becomes aware.
- Taking a full and active part on all training programs for safety that the school organises.
- Ensuring students in their care are evacuated in line with protocols when the fire alarm is activated.
- Record all incidents/accidents on Accident Report Form.

### **1.7. Responsibilities of the School Librarian**

The responsibilities of the School Librarian include the following:

- Ensuring students do not enter the library unsupervised.
- Recording and reporting incidents/accidents that occur in the library.
- Actively participate in fire safety drills.
- Take part in all safety training organised by the school.

- Report to the Principal without unreasonable delay, any defects in any equipment that may affect the health, safety or welfare of anyone in the library.

### **1.8. Responsibilities of Administrative Staff**

The responsibilities of administrative staff include the following:

- Actively participating in fire drills.
- Carrying out regular inspections to ensure the office is satisfactory in terms of health and safety.
- Reporting any defects in office equipment as soon as possible.
- Maintaining a list of emergency numbers.
- Taking reasonable care of their own safety, health and welfare and that of any other person who may be affected by their acts/omissions while at work.
- Record all incidents/accidents on Accident Report Form.

### **1.9. Responsibilities of Caretaker**

The caretakers have responsibility for the general care and maintenance of the school.

Their responsibilities include:

- Taking reasonable care of their own safety, health and welfare and that of any other person who may be affected by their acts or omissions while at work.
- Carrying out regular inspections to ensure the internal and external school grounds and buildings are satisfactory as regards health, safety and welfare.
- The findings of such inspections should be communicated to the Principal as soon as possible after the inspection has taken place.
- Reporting to the Principal, without unreasonable delay, any defects in plant, equipment, place of work or system of work, which might endanger safety, health or welfare of which they become aware.
- Making correct use of machinery, apparatus, tools, dangerous substances or any other equipment.
- Using suitable appliances, protective clothing, equipment or other aids provided to secure safety, health or welfare and not to interfere with or misuse any of same.
- Being thoroughly familiar with the operating procedures before using machinery or power equipment.
- Ensuring that no one has access to areas which are hazardous or where hazardous work is in progress.
- Preventing the build-up of rubbish, in particular combustible material.
- Ensuring the proper maintenance of furniture, equipment and the work environment within the school.
- Disposing of all faulty furniture and equipment which is beyond repair.

- Not carrying out any tasks that they are not competent or permitted to carry out or which involve unreasonably high risk.
- Taking a full and active part in all training programs for safety that the school organises facilitates or recommends.
- Implementing all areas of safety training.
- Reporting to the Principal any activities which may compromise health, safety or welfare of any member of the school community, visitor or contractor.
- Record all incidents/accidents on Accident Report Form.

#### **1.10. Responsibilities of the Cleaning Staff**

Cleaning staff have responsibility for the general cleanliness and hygiene of the school.

They have specific responsibilities, in the context of health and safety, to:

- Take reasonable care for their own safety, health and welfare and that of any other person who may be affected by their actions or omissions while at work.
- Co-operate with the Principal, Caretaker and any other person to such an extent as will enable the Principal or the other competent person to comply with any of the relevant statutory provisions.
- Reporting to the Principal, without unreasonable delay, any defects in plant, equipment, place of work or system of work, which might endanger safety, health or welfare of which they become aware.
- Be familiar with fire drill protocols.
- To use appropriate signage when cleaning is in progress or where a spillage or other hazardous object is present.
- Record all incidents/accidents on Accident Report Form.

#### **1.11. Responsibilities of Temporary Employees**

Temporary workers directly employed by Coláiste Pobail Acla whether on a fixed term contract or not, are, in regard to health, safety and welfare, generally considered as employees. They will assume the duties and responsibilities commensurate with their role, as outlined in the preceding sections.

#### **1.12. Responsibilities of First Aiders**

The responsibilities of occupational first aiders are to:

- Participate in certificate and refresher training when it is made available.
- Where required, promptly administer first aid to any employee, student, contractor or visitor in accordance with knowledge or training.
- Conduct periodic inspection and co-ordinate replenishment of first aid supplies and equipment including defibrillators.



### **1.13. Responsibilities of Contractors and Subcontractors**

It is the responsibility of all contractors and subcontractors to:

- Ensure that all their employees comply with Coláiste Pobail Acla safety rules and procedures.
- Not put at risk any of the employees or students of Coláiste Pobail Acla.
- Promptly report all accidents/incidents to the Principal as Safety Officer.
- Produce their safety statement to the Principal on request and prior to commencing work.
- Carry appropriate insurance cover.
- Take appropriate safety precautions with systems of work, equipment, personal protection, etc.
- Ensure all equipment and tools brought onto the school's premises be of sound construction and meet the statutory requirements applicable to these tools and equipment.
- Cordon off the boundaries of the contractor's operation, where possible, and mark them with warning signs.
- Comply with all relevant legal obligations, in particular the provisions of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, the Safety, Health and Welfare (General Application) Regulations 2007 and the Safety Health and Welfare (Construction Regulations) 2006.

### **1.14. Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians**

It is the responsibility of Parents/Guardians to:

- Notify the school of any health care issues in relation to their children.

## **2. Safety Representative**

The Safety Representative may consult with and make representations to the Principal, as Safety Officer, on safety, health and welfare matters relating to the employees in their place of work.

The Principal in consultation with the Board of Management must consider these representations, and act on them if necessary. The intention of these consultations is to prevent accidents and ill health, to highlight problems and identify means of overcoming them.

The functions of the Safety Representative include:

- Accompany a H.S.A. Inspector carrying out an inspection under section 64 of the 2005 Act, other than the investigation of an accident or dangerous occurrence (although this may be allowed at the discretion of the inspector and where the employee concerned so requests).

- Be present when an employee is being interviewed by an inspector about an accident or dangerous occurrence at work.
- Make verbal or written representations to H.S.A. inspectors including on the investigation of accidents or dangerous occurrences.
- Receive advice from H.S.A. inspectors in relation to safety, health and welfare in the place of work.

A Safety Representative will be appointed at the start of each year, or when deemed necessary by School Management.

### **3. Duty of all Staff**

- It is not appropriate for any member of staff in a school to be under the influence of any intoxicant.
- It is the duty of all staff, if reasonably required by his or her employer, to submit to any reasonable and proportionate tests for intoxicants by, or under the supervision of a registered Medical Practitioner who is a competent person as prescribed.

### **4. Hazards (See Appendix 1)**

Following a detailed review of the school premises and activities a number of hazards have been identified. These are listed in Appendix 1 to this statement together with procedures for dealing with them where appropriate.

### **5. Safety Training**

All employees will be:

- Advised on the nature and location of fire equipment and how it might be operated.
- Instructed in evacuation procedures.
- Notified of any changes in safety procedures.
- Periodically offered training in first aid.

### **6. Welfare of Staff**

- Toilet and staffroom facilities are provided, and employees must help to maintain a high standard of hygiene in these areas.
- Any person who is under medical supervision or on prescribed medication and who has been certified fit for work, should notify the Principal of any known side effects or temporary physical disabilities which could hinder their work performance, and which may be a danger to either themselves or their fellow workers or pupils. The Principal will arrange or assign appropriate tasks for that person to carry out in the interim.

- It is recognised that from time to time staff may experience work related stress. It is our aim to be proactive in the reduction/management of sources of stress. Staff who are subject to occupational stressors are encouraged to seek assistance from school management who may refer them to Call Care, the Occupational Health Service Medmark.
- Coláiste Pobail Acla's Policy Dignity in the Workplace outlines the procedures which should be followed by any member of the school community who may experience sexual harassment, harassment or bullying.
- This school is committed to protecting the reproductive health of all employees. A pregnant employee must notify management of her condition as soon as is practicable.

### **7. First Aid (See Appendix 2)**

First Aid is available in the following areas:

- Secretary's Office
- Home Economics Room
- Science Lab
- Art Room
- Materials Technology (Wood) room
- Materials Technology (Metal) room

Students who are sick must report directly to the Principal or Deputy Principal or the relevant Class Tutor. With their permission they should make contact with home via the Secretary's office before leaving the premises. They should also sign out if going home due to illness. No medication should be administered to any student unless on medical advice and with prior approval of Parents/Guardians. If a student sustains an injury he/she should be brought to the Secretary's office. If the student is bleeding protective gloves should be used when administering first aid. If deemed necessary, the student may be brought to a more private location for treatment. Parents/Guardians may be contacted, or medical assistance sought if deemed necessary. Details of the injury should be recorded on the Accident Report Form.

## **8. General Information**

### **8.1. Fire**

#### Fire Protection

- Fire extinguishers, hose reels and fire blankets are provided and correctly sited to meet statutory and insurance requirements.
- All fire exits, and emergency paths or exits are clearly marked.

#### Prevention

- Regular fire drills are held (One per term).
- Students are made aware of fire prevention
- Liaison with relevant authorities takes place as is necessary.

#### Evacuation

An evacuation procedure has been prepared and is displayed in each classroom. Evacuation drills will take place at least twice per year or more frequently if required. Employees are reminded to familiarise themselves with the procedures so that a fast and effective evacuation of the premises can be completed in the event of an emergency. See Appendix 9 for our Fire Evacuation Plan.

### **8.2. Smoking**

As Coláiste Pobail Acla is a public building smoking is prohibited by law, as referred to in our Substance Abuse Policy.

### **8.3. Accident/Incident Report Procedures**

- All incidents, no matter how trivial, whether to employees, pupils or visitors, must be recorded using the Accident Report Form. This is necessary to monitor the progress of safety standards and to ensure that proper medical attention is given where required.
- An Accident Report Form shall be kept in the Secretary's Office for the recording of all accidents.
- If deemed necessary/relevant, accidents shall be notified to Insurers on appropriate forms
- Injuries to any employee as a result of an accident while at work where the injury results in the employee being unable to carry out their normal work duties for more than three consecutive days, excluding the day of the accident, must be reported to the Authority. These guidelines will apply to any person who has an accident on school property or while in the care of the school.

#### **8.4. Sport**

- The protocols for those involved in sport are outlined in Appendix 3. Please also refer to our Out of School Activities Policy.

#### **8.5. Visitors to the School**

- All parents and visitors should report in the first instance to the School Reception.
- No contractor may undertake work on the school site without permission of the Principal or his agent other than in an emergency, e.g. fire, flooding or to make safe following theft/vandalism.
- Contractors are responsible for the Health and Safety of their employees and for their safe working practices which must not constitute a hazard to staff, students and visitors to the school.
- Anyone who hires the school premises must use school equipment correctly and use appropriate safety equipment. They must also have their own insurance in place of which a copy must be furnished to the school.

#### **8.6. Transport**

The protocols for transport are outlined in our schools Out of School Activities Policy

### **9. Lone Worker Procedures**

The Board is committed to ensuring staff, volunteers and contractors enjoy a safe working environment. It is recognised that there are occasions when teaching, support, administrative, cleaning staff may be required, or choose, to work alone or in isolated situations. This however may increase risks for a work activity.

#### Procedure:

- Staff should seek permission from the Principal to work alone in the building outside of normal school hours.
- The experience and training of all staff and the activities to be undertaken will be taken into consideration before allowing lone working. Lone workers must be considered capable of responding correctly in an emergency situation by the Principal.
- Staff should not enter the school premises if there are signs of intruders but should contact the Principal and if necessary the Gardaí.
- Staff should lock entrance doors upon entering and leaving the building. The alarm should also be activated on leaving the building.
- Staff should not work alone if they have a medical condition that might cause incapacity or unconsciousness.

- Contractors should have access to their own first aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries.
- Lone workers should not undertake activities that involve the handling of money, working at height or any task which is potentially hazardous given their own level of experience and the nature of the task.

## **10. Student Pregnancy**

The protocols are outlined in Appendix 6.

## **11. Related Policies and Documents**

- Health and Safety at Work Act 2005
- The Safety, Health and Welfare (General Application) Regulations 2007
- The Safety, Health and Welfare (Construction Regulations) 2006
- Code of Behaviour
- Out of School Activities Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Substance Misuse Policy
- Uniform Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Critical Incident Policy

## **12. Conclusion**

This Health and Safety Policy has been prepared based on conditions existing in Coláiste Pobail Acla at the time of writing. It may be altered, revised or updated as required to reflect any changes in those conditions.

## **13. Declaration**

This Coláiste Pobail Acla Policy was formed following consultation with all staff, members of the Board of Management, Parents/Guardians and the Student Council. It is recommended that this policy be reviewed annually or whenever it is deemed necessary by School Management. It was adopted by the Board of Management of Coláiste Pobail Acla on:

## Health and Safety Policy

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. Pat Kilbane

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. Paul Fahy

Board Secretary & School Principal (Acting)

## 14. Appendices

### Appendix 1 - Hazards

#### Science Room

##### Hazard:

Dangerous chemicals are stored in these rooms and are used for experiments. Flammable liquids are stored and used during experiments. Bunsen burners, hotplates, power supplies, specialised glassware, dissection instruments and lasers are used during experiments. Gas taps and electrical sockets are present in science rooms for experimental purposes.

##### Procedures for dealing with hazard:

- The Science Room is to be locked except when in use. Each teacher is responsible for locking the room at the end of each class.
- When the class teacher is absent the class should be supervised at an alternative location whenever possible.
- Pupils are not allowed to remain in Science Room without a teacher present.
- Chemicals must be properly labelled and stored in compliance with DES and HSA guidelines.
- Out of date chemicals must be disposed of in compliance with DES and HSA guidelines, this will be organised by members of the subject department and appropriate records should be kept.
- Safety equipment provided (e.g. gloves, safety glasses, etc.) must be used by teachers and pupils.
- Detailed instructions on the safe use of the science room are prominently displayed therein.
- Broken glassware to be disposed of in the appropriate manner.
- After school students should only be in the Science Room at the request of, and under the supervision of, a teacher.
- Eating and drinking is prohibited in Science Room.
- Chemical stores are kept locked.
- Fume cupboards are available to enable safe use of hazardous chemicals.
- Students are made aware of general and specific hazards before commencing experiment work.
- Safety exits are clearly displayed and not obstructed.
- Gas and electricity can be shut down by a main control in each science room.
- Fire extinguishers are available.
- A First Aid Box is available in each science room- supplied with plasters, sterile wipes, eye wash and burns spray.
- Accidents are reported in the school's main Accident Report Form book.



## **Home Economics Room**

### Hazard:

Cooking and preparation of hot foods which could splash or spill on teachers or students. Risk of cuts when preparing ingredients for cooking. Cookers are operated by gas and electricity which require special safety procedures.

### Procedures for dealing with hazard

- The kitchen must be locked except when in use. Each teacher is responsible for locking the room at the end of the class.
- Pupils are not allowed in the room unless a teacher is present.
- Safety equipment supplied (e.g. gloves) must be used by teachers and students where appropriate.
- All gas and electricity must be shut down at the main control.
- Plasters and sterile wipes are available in the First Aid Box.
- A mop is available for spillages.
- In the event of minor burns a burn spray is available in the First Aid Box. Medical attention should be sought if the incident is serious.
- 2 Fire extinguishers are available inside the classroom. 2 fire blankets are also available.
- A poster highlighting safety procedures is prominently displayed in each kitchen.
- Fire escape route prominently displayed in each kitchen.
- Any electrical appliance or piece of equipment found to be in an unsafe condition to be reported immediately to the appropriate authority.
- When the class teacher is absent the class should be supervised at an alternative location whenever possible.
- After school students should only be in the Home Economics Rooms at the request of, and under the supervision of a teacher.

### Hazard:

Sewing machines contain sharp needles which present a danger to safety.

### Procedures for dealing with hazard:

- A First Aid Box is available.
- All electrical appliances must be switched off at the end of each class.
- Students are not permitted to use any equipment (e.g. sewing machines, scissors, etc.) except under the supervision of their class teacher.

## **Art Room**

### Procedures for dealing with hazard:

- Before students begin a new art project, safety rules should be presented to students. The instructor should verify that students understand the rules.
- The First Aid Box in the Art Room should be fully stocked and equipped.
- Gloves provided for cleaning.
- Class room safety rules published and displayed.
- Secure storage for materials.
- School safety rules made known to students.
- Annual equipment, furniture and room check.
- Students informed of evacuation procedures and evacuation map visible in Art Room.
- After school students should only be in the Art Room at the request of, and under the supervision of a teacher.
- The Art Room must be kept locked except when in use.

## **Multiple Use Games Area (MUGA)**

### Procedures for dealing with hazard:

- All equipment should only be used under the supervision of a qualified teacher.
- Faulty equipment should be brought to the attention of the teacher immediately.
- Appropriate clothing and footwear should be used for all activities undertaken.
- A First Aid Box is available in the Secretary's office for minor injuries.
- In the event of serious injury professional medical assistance should be sought.

## **Construction Studies Room**

### Procedures for dealing with hazard:

- The Construction Studies Room must be kept locked except when in use. Each teacher is responsible for locking the room at the end of each class.
- When the class teacher is absent the class should be supervised at an alternative location whenever possible.
- All machines should be used only under the supervision and guidance of the class teacher.
- On first entering the workshop students have the rules explained to them. They are then allocated a bench which they will use for the remainder of their time in the workshop.
- Signage is used to reinforce good practice.
- Faulty or malfunctioning equipment should be brought to the attention of the class teacher immediately.
- Schoolbags should not be left near machines where there is a risk of a student tripping on them.
- Pupils are not allowed in the room unless a teacher is present.
- Appropriate safety equipment must be used by teacher and students (e.g. safety glasses)
- After school students should only be in the Construction Studies Room at the request of, and under the supervision of, the class teacher.

### Each student must adhere by the workshop rules:

- Show courtesy and respect towards other students at all times.
- Use hand tools correctly.
- No running in the workshop.
- Keep the workshop tidy.
- Wear goggles when using machines to keep eyes safe.
- Do not use a machine without having been shown how to use it properly and without permission to use it.
- Know where the emergency exit is.
- Be aware of the location of fire extinguishers.
- Wear a mask when using equipment that produces fumes.
- Check that tools are safe to use.
- Tie back long hair.
- Only one person per machine.
- Obey all teacher instructions.
- Ensure there is no loose clothing.

## **Engineering Room**

### Procedures for dealing with hazard:

- The Engineering Room must be kept locked except when in use. Each teacher is responsible for locking the room at the end of each class.
- When the class teacher is absent the class should be supervised at an alternative location whenever possible
- All machines should be used only under the supervision and guidance of the class teacher.
- On first entering the workshop students have the rules explained to them. They are then allocated a bench which they will use for the remainder of their time in the workshop.
- Signage is used to reinforce good practice.
- Faulty or malfunctioning equipment should be brought to the attention of the class teacher immediately.
- Schoolbags should not be left near machines where there is a risk of a student tripping on them.
- Pupils are not allowed in the room unless a teacher is present.
- Appropriate safety equipment must be used by teacher and students (e.g. safety glasses)
- After school students should only be in the Engineering Room at the request of, and under the supervision of, the class teacher.

### Each student must adhere by the workshop rules:

- Show courtesy and respect towards other students at all times.
- Use hand tools correctly.
- No running in the workshop.
- Keep the workshop tidy.
- Wear goggles when using machines to keep eyes safe.
- Do not use a machine without having been shown how to use it properly and without permission to use it.
- Know where the emergency exit is.
- Be aware of the location of fire extinguishers.
- Wear a mask when using equipment that produces fumes.
- Check that tools are safe to use.
- Tie back long hair.
- Only one person per machine.
- Obey all teacher instructions.
- Ensure there is no loose clothing

## **Computer Room**

### Procedures for dealing with hazard:

- Computer Room must be kept locked except when in use. Each teacher is responsible for locking the room at the end of each class.
- When the class teacher is absent the class should be supervised at an alternative location whenever possible
- Computers should be used only under the supervision of the class teacher.
- Pupils are not allowed in the room unless a teacher is present.
- Faulty and malfunctioning equipment should be brought to the attention of the teacher.
- Students should only be in the Computer Room after school at the request of, and under the supervision of a teacher.
- Students are permitted to use the computers for school related work only.
- All students and staff must abide by and follow the I.C.T. Policy

## **Horticulture**

### Hazard:

There are several pieces of equipment which are potentially dangerous if not used in the correct manner.

### Procedures for dealing with hazard.

- Students are taught the correct method of handling, transporting and storing tools.
- The main tools used are spades, digging forks, secateurs and loppers.
- Most tools are manually operated but students are also taught overall safety on the farm and in the garden.
- Accidents are reported in the Accident Report Form in the office.
- Chemicals are rarely used as organic horticulture is taught. In the very few cases where the lessons refer to chemicals a placebo is used, and students wear protective clothing, goggles and gloves.
- When leaving the classroom to work outside or to visit a location off the school premises students are given instructions, e.g. the route to be taken, the length of time it should take and to remain together. The Out of School Activities Policy should be referred to for further information.

## **Student Movement**

### Hazard:

The teachers are class based which entails considerable student movement during the course of the day. There is potential for congestion and student injury due to trips and falls.

### Procedures for dealing with risk:

- Students are instructed to walk from class to class. No running is permitted.
- Students are supervised before school, at break-time, at lunchtime and immediately after school.
- To facilitate student movement students must queue for class as designated.

## **School Grounds**

### Hazard:

There are several areas on the school grounds which are potentially dangerous.

### Procedures for dealing with risk:

The following areas are out of bounds to students;

- All classrooms (except under the supervision of a teacher)
- All rooftops
- All electrical appliances (unless being used under supervision)
- All plant and equipment
- Caretaker's storeroom
- The School Library (except under the supervision of a member of staff)

## **School Bags**

### Hazard:

School Bags left in inappropriate places constitute a risk in respect of trips and falls.

### Procedures for dealing with risk:

- Lockers are provided for all students who wish to avail of them.
- Bags are not permitted in areas which block doors, fire exits or in areas where there is pedestrian traffic.
- Where racks are provided students are expected to use these for the storage of their bags.

- Students should be reminded (by their Class Tutor) to use their lockers appropriately in order to reduce the number of books they carry around, thereby reducing the weight of their school bag.

### **General Information**

#### Rules regarding what to do in case of an accident:

Pupils to stay calm, inform the teacher of what has occurred and await instruction from teacher. A student may be dispatched to get assistance from the school office or another teacher. The teacher will stay with the student who has been injured. In case of an accident with the teacher a student should seek help from the school office or another teacher.

#### Rules regarding what to do in case of a fire:

Fire evacuation procedures should be clearly displayed. Pupils to stay calm, leave all their goods in the classroom and line up in an orderly fashion as directed by the teacher. If a fire should occur near a student, the student should inform the teacher immediately.

## **Appendix 2 - First Aid**

First Aid Kits are available in the Secretary's Office, Construction/Engineering and Home Economics Room. There are also kits available for teams. For matches the kit should be collected and returned to office. A list of qualified first aiders should be displayed in the staff room and in the Secretary's office.

A defibrillator is available outside the Staff Room. A list of personnel trained to use a defibrillator will be visible at the defibrillator.



### **Appendix 3 - Sports Protocols**

- All students are insured as part of the school insurance scheme.
- Two people to accompany a team to games. If cover cannot be provided for two members of staff one member of staff will travel with one other Garda Vetted adult approved by School Management.
- Team mentor is responsible for bringing a first aid kit to all games.
- In the event of a serious injury a team mentor will immediately contact the school Principal and the Parents/Guardians of the injured student.
- If the injury requires immediate medical attention the teacher should contact the emergency services and one of the two adults in charge should accompany the student to the hospital/clinic. That person should wait at the hospital/clinic with the student until such time as a Parent/Guardian or other family member arrives.
- If an injury requires the attention of a local doctor a staff member should accompany the student to the doctor, on their return to school and wait with the student until such time as a Parent/Guardian or other family member arrives.
- If the Parents/Guardians of the injured student is in attendance at the game they may take the student to the hospital/ doctor if they wish to do so.
- The teacher should report any incident/accident on an Accident Report Form upon his/her return to the school.

## **Appendix 4 - Administration of Prescribed Drugs**

- School staff are prohibited from administering any medication to students except for administering an epi-pen in the case of an allergic where the Parents/Guardians have given prior approval.
- Parents/Guardians should inform school authorities of any student allergies at time of enrolment or when such allergies come to notice. Written consent should be given if Parents/Guardians wish that an epi-pen be administered to their son/daughter.
- School authorities should be notified if a student is on any ongoing medication e.g. treatment for diabetes (adrenalin pen, etc.).
- Where necessary the school will store and make available to the student prescribed medication in accordance with written medical instructions from the student's doctor. The school authorities will also make available a suitable location for administering the medication.
- All medication should be administered out of public view.
- No student should consume prescribed medication on the school premises without the prior knowledge and approval of the Principal.

## **Appendix 5 - Transport**

The close proximity of the student population to motorised traffic constitutes a significant risk. A number of protocols have been put in place to minimise this risk:

- Students are not permitted to drive/park vehicles on the school premises.
- School buses do not enter the school premises but stop at designated areas near the boundary of the school grounds.
- Parents'/Guardians' cars are not permitted to enter the school grounds to drop or collect students unless approved by Principal when there are exceptional circumstances (e.g. the student is on crutches or in a wheelchair, etc.).

## **Appendix 6 - Students who are pregnant while attending Coláiste Pobail Acla**

This protocol is based on the Guidelines as contained in:

‘Guidelines for Best Practice in Supporting Students who are Pregnant and those who are Parents within our Education System’. Produced by Treoir

Teen pregnancy and parenthood can with effective support lead to positive outcomes for the parent and child. The education system is one of the agencies well placed to promote this aspect of social inclusion. Teenage pregnancy and parenthood has been identified as an important social, health and education issue.

### Aim of this Protocol

To put in place supports aimed at ensuring that students who become pregnant or who are parents are supported to continue in education.

### Core Principles underpinning this protocol

- The vulnerability of a student who is pregnant needs to be kept to the fore at all times.
- There may be a number of issues in relation to disclosure, health issues and choices.
- Partnership between school, home/family, community/statutory agencies and voluntary bodies is central to supporting a student in this context.
- Respect and support from within the school for those who volunteer to work with these students.

### Response to a Disclosure of Pregnancy

- Identify and respond to the individual needs of students who are pregnant and those who are parents in the school.
- Support the student while attending Coláiste Pobail Acla for the duration of their pregnancy and support their return to education following the birth of their baby.
- Ensure within the resources available to Coláiste Pobail Acla, that health and safety matters relating to a pregnancy are met. This may where necessary and appropriate involve referral to outside agencies.
- Ensure that each student who is pregnant is aware of the range of supports available to her.
- Raise the awareness of those in education on the necessity to both sustain an environment where student care is paramount and whereby a student who is pregnant will feel able to disclose their pregnancy.
- Enable the school to respond in a focused and planned way to the range of needs that emerge throughout the pregnancy.

### Confidentiality

- Confidentiality is about managing sensitive information that arises in a trusting relationship and doing so in a manner that is respectful, professional, and trustful and in accordance with the policy practice of Coláiste Pobail Acla.
- All staff members must inform the Principal if it comes to their attention that a student at Coláiste Pobail Acla is pregnant.
- Principal will inform relevant personnel including relevant staff, students' Parents/Guardians and where appropriate relevant outside agencies
- Having informed the Principal, all staff should treat in confidence information about students including: name, address, biographical details and other descriptions of the individual's life and circumstances which might result in identification of the student member.
- The student should be informed that the Principal must be informed of the disclosure.
- The personal circumstance of any student should be disclosed to other staff only on a 'need to know' basis.
- Staff should always show respect for the interests and welfare of students.

### Disclosure

The following guidelines aim to ensure that in the event of a disclosure of a pregnancy that the disclosure is handled in a manner, which is respectful, sensitive and at all times is supportive of the students' well-being. Students should feel safe and comfortable in coming forward to make disclosures. A disclosure of pregnancy may come from the student themselves, her partner (who may also be a student), Parents/Guardians or a third party.

Staff cannot make a promise to keep a disclosure of pregnancy a secret as the Principal must be informed. This must be managed in a sensitive transparent way with the student concerned.

The initial disclosure may be a partial disclosure or a series of indirect questions about pregnancy which is often to gauge the reaction of the staff member to the fact that the student may be pregnant.

The student may be experiencing a wide range of emotions in response to the pregnancy which can often be conflicting and traumatic and include:

- Fear, uncertainty with regard to what is involved.
- Guilt, blame, embarrassment, confusion and anxiety while awaiting a reaction from the person to whom the disclosure is being made.
- Fear of consequence from the disclosure particularly if the Parents/Guardians are unaware of the pregnancy.
- Stigma resulting from the perceived reaction from the staff, other students and the community generally.

If the disclosure is by either of the two individuals directly involved, he/she will most likely have deliberately chosen the person whom they wish to disclose to because of their sense of trust in the person.

All disclosures of pregnancy or suspected pregnancy should be treated seriously in an informed, sensitive and professional manner.

It is important to observe what is said and the behaviour of the student as the disclosure is being made, noting any signs of anxiety, stress, fear, etc.

In the event that a disclosure occurs when the teacher is otherwise occupied, finding the space, including physical space, to stop and listen is important.

- Allow the student to talk without prompting, do not rush the student.
- Maintain a calm atmosphere throughout this time.
- Avoid questions that provide a yes or no answer as these may curtail the spontaneous nature of the disclosure.
- Be honest and do not promise what you cannot deliver especially confidentiality.
- Check with the student how she/he is at the moment both psychologically and health wise.
- Inform the student about the procedure that is followed and if known, the level of assistance, which the school and external agencies can provide.
- Agree/outline the next steps with the student in the process, in particular explore if Parents/Guardians are aware of the pregnancy and how best to inform them.

Should the student disclose or if it is suspected that the pregnancy occurred as a result of child abuse, the Principal/ Designated Liaison person (DLP) or Deputy Designated Liaison person (DDL) must be informed immediately and the school child protection policy implemented in line with the Children First Child Protection Guidelines and Department of Education Guideline.

### School Response to Disclosure

- If Psychological Report is available, it must be reviewed immediately.
- The Principal will appoint a contact person for child.
- Structured meetings on a regular basis will take place with the contact person and the student and if required the Principal.
- The Principal and one other (usually the contact person) will liaise with Parents/Guardians & outside agencies.

### Working with Parents/Guardians of Student Concerned

In the spirit of working in partnership with Parents/Guardians and in safeguarding the health and safety of a student the school has a responsibility to ensure that Parents/Guardians are unaware of the pregnancy that they are informed about the pregnancy at the earliest possible convenience.

In order to ensure the best outcome for the student if a disclosure/ suspicion of pregnancy has emerged the following points should be borne in mind:

- Be sensitive to the rights, needs and concerns of Parents/Guardians.
- Good practice suggests, in order to ensure an ongoing working relationship with the Parents/Guardians, open, honest and non-judgmental communication from the start is essential.

- As an initial step it is important to work with the student on a one-to-one basis to explain why the Parents/Guardians need to know particularly from a health perspective and to enable the student to tell them herself at home.

Parents/Guardians need to be informed and if the student remains unable to inform the Parents/Guardians on her own, the key support person and the principal could set up a meeting with the Parents/Guardians in consultation with the student and support the student when telling her Parents/Guardians herself.

If the student remains unable or refuses to inform the Parents/Guardians, it is important that she is informed that the school is obliged to do so in her best interests, unless doing so is likely to endanger the student in any way. In the event that such a potential risk has been identified, the school will need to determine the nature and extent of the risk and if necessary liaise with colleagues in the local Health Service Executive without delay to agree on an appropriate plan of action.

If no such risk is identified the Principal/ key support person will set up a meeting with the Parents/Guardians and the student to inform them about the pregnancy, remaining at all times sensitive to the potential stresses at this time. It is important that the school offer support to the student and the Parents/Guardians and link them to other support services as required.

The school should reassure the Parents/Guardians and the student of their commitment to support the student to remain in school and partake in school life.

A set of subsequent meetings to be arranged to provide ongoing support and information with both the Parents/Guardians and the student. During these meetings the Parents/Guardian should be informed of the role the school will now play in partnership with the Parents/Guardians, student and other agencies. This may include the development of a care plan for the student.

### Fatherhood

The needs of young men who are expectant parents or are parents within our education system are quite often similar to those of young women. They too may feel isolated and alone with a different set of responsibilities than that of their peers who are not parents.

For those who are no longer in a relationship with the child's mother and are not their child's main carer this can be a very lonely time.

Many feel guilty about not being able to support the mother and child properly, emotionally and financially.

A number of barriers have been identified as to why young fathers are not more involved in their children's upbringing, namely inadequate housing, low income and resistance from the mother or from members of either family.

It is recommended that schools acknowledge young men who are expectant parents and put in place supports aimed at ensuring that they are supported to continue their education and encouraged to play an active role in the parenting of their children.

### Student Care Plan

In order to create the best conditions to support the student throughout their pregnancy and to provide the necessary level of support to the student good practice would suggest that a care plan be developed in partnership with the student, Parents/Guardians and any relevant external agency

The care plan should be developed to meet the individual needs of the student which will address: support during pregnancy, health and safety matters, expectations of the school with regard to the performance of the student and address the issue of continuing in education following the birth.

All aspects of this plan should be developed in consultation with the student concerned.

Maintaining the balance between supporting the student and carrying out its business in a normal way is crucial for the school. This may involve discussing with the student and Parents/Guardians what is acceptable behaviour and norms for the student during pregnancy and after the birth. This discussion should take account of the needs of the student, teachers and other students.

### Role and Responsibilities of Staff

Coláiste Pobail Acla will designate a member of staff who will act as a key support person to work with the student throughout the pregnancy and after the birth.

In as far as is possible, the individual should be student centred and have a specific interest in such matters as pastoral care and have shown particular skills in the area of student support.

The key support person/teacher is not expected to have expertise with regard to counselling a student who is pregnant on the outcomes of that pregnancy and options open to her at that time.

The support person/teacher would act on behalf of the school as a liaison with the student and the Parents/Guardians in addressing issues raised by the pregnancy for the student, the school or other agencies as required.

The key support person/teacher in collaboration with the student and her Parents/Guardians would design a care plan for the care of the student while attending school.

The care plan will involve the Parents/Guardians and the student meeting with the assigned staff member at intervals during the pregnancy.

It is recommended that the key support person/teacher should meet with the student at regular intervals, at least monthly to monitor and review the plan.

Provision should also be made for additional ad hoc meetings with the student at other times as specific needs arise and to offer whatever support is relevant.

The key support person/teacher may also need to attend external meetings with other agencies, which may arise when implementing the plan.



### Health and Safety

The school has a duty of care to ensure that the school environment promotes conditions where the health and safety of each student is safeguarded while on the school campus.

Coláiste Pobail Acla may have to review its Health and Safety Policy in light of pregnancy and parenthood among students.

The following issues will need to be addressed in the care plan:

- A review of access to the school buildings and classrooms.
- To ensure that in as far as is reasonable that adjustments are made to facilitate ease of access to locations of study and class and that all potential health hazards are identified and addressed be they physical or environmental such as chemicals, infectious diseases etc.
- It may therefore be necessary to carry out a potential hazard identification audit.

The provision of information on health-related matters in conjunction with other agencies (the local Health Service Executive, Health and Safety Authority, etc.) on any potential risks associated with pregnancy and school attendance will include:

- Particular contact sports such as PE, team sports.
- School-based activities, which may involve exposure to any chemicals considered to be hazardous in the event of exposure during pregnancy.
- Any infectious health conditions which may arise in the school.
- Physical safety matters such as: potential difficulties regarding the student moving within the environs of the school, carrying bags, size of desks, need for special breaks, access to school bus, etc.
- Flexibility around the wearing of the school uniform to ensure that the student is as comfortable as possible, etc.
- Duration of maternity leave may need to be decided. In employment situations an employee must take at least four weeks before the end of the week her baby is due (as medically certified) and four weeks after the birth and is entitled to a minimum period of eighteen weeks maternity leave. (Maternity Protection Act 1994)
- The school will need to be informed by the student about visits to GPs and to both antenatal and postnatal care.

An ongoing review of the plan will occur throughout the pregnancy, in particular liaising with other agencies such as local parent support programmes to ensure that emerging needs are met.

### Academic Considerations

It is recommended that an academic plan to meet the student's requirements be drawn up.

This plan would make provision for the following:

- Identifying potential subjects requiring attention in conjunction with the range of needs which may arise throughout the stages of pregnancy and birth ensuring at all times the ongoing inclusion of the student in the school activities.
- How and when to access extra tuition if required.
- Special exam arrangements if required.
- Childcare and counselling considerations.

### Liaising with External Agencies

Coláiste Pobail Acla will work in close liaison with external agencies and act as a source of referral if and when the need arises.

The Principal or support person involved with the student would refer the student to appropriate agencies to discuss the options available to her during the pregnancy and post birth.

In the event of a miscarriage or still birth the school will continue to support and care for the student in liaison with other relevant agencies.

Consideration may need to be given to the distances students may have to travel to access ante-natal care, which can create regular and significant absences from school.

The potential difficulties that travelling long distances to access services in late pregnancy needs to be recognised and, in such situations, flexibility may be required if students wish to commence maternity leave earlier than expected.

### Supporting the Student after the Birth

New challenges arise for the student and the school in supporting the student after the birth of her child. The student is now a parent and will be coming to terms with her new responsibilities.

The challenges presented by the birth of the child may cause the student to review her commitment to completing her education. It is important that the support process begun during pregnancy continues.

The following issues may need to be addressed:

- Student as a parent within the school.
- Continual affirmation of the student as a young person with the same needs as other young people her age.
- When necessary harness external support structures that will assist the student to continue in education.

### Student as a Parent within the School

In consultation with the student, the school may need to plan how best to manage the student's return to the school post the birth of the baby and her reintegration to the class. Practical issues relating to the student's role as a parent may also need to be addressed, such as increased academic support due to maternity leave, facilitating attendance at child health clinics, etc.

It is important that the student is given every opportunity to reintegrate into school-based activities as soon as is reasonably safe to do so.

It may be appropriate to await a medical certificate of fitness for reintegration to particular activities such as sports, etc.

Given the additional demands that parenting will entail it is important that the school adopts a flexible approach with regard to the participation of the student in particular school activities and academic demands.

Consideration may also need to be given to the extent to which the student concerned wishes to share the news of his/her baby with classmates and/or the school community.

Encourage the student to be continually engaged in activities with their peers such as sports, field trips, excursions etc. Although their lives have changed, they are still young people with the same needs as their peers.

Continued liaison with external agencies is imperative to enable the student to cope with the additional demands both psychological and practical of being a parent.

### Support for students who choose not to return to education.

In the event that the student concerned does not return to school following the birth of her baby, a meeting should be held to provide her with the opportunity to address any concerns she may have which may act as an impediment to her returning to complete her education.

## **Appendix 7 -Emergency Response Protocol**

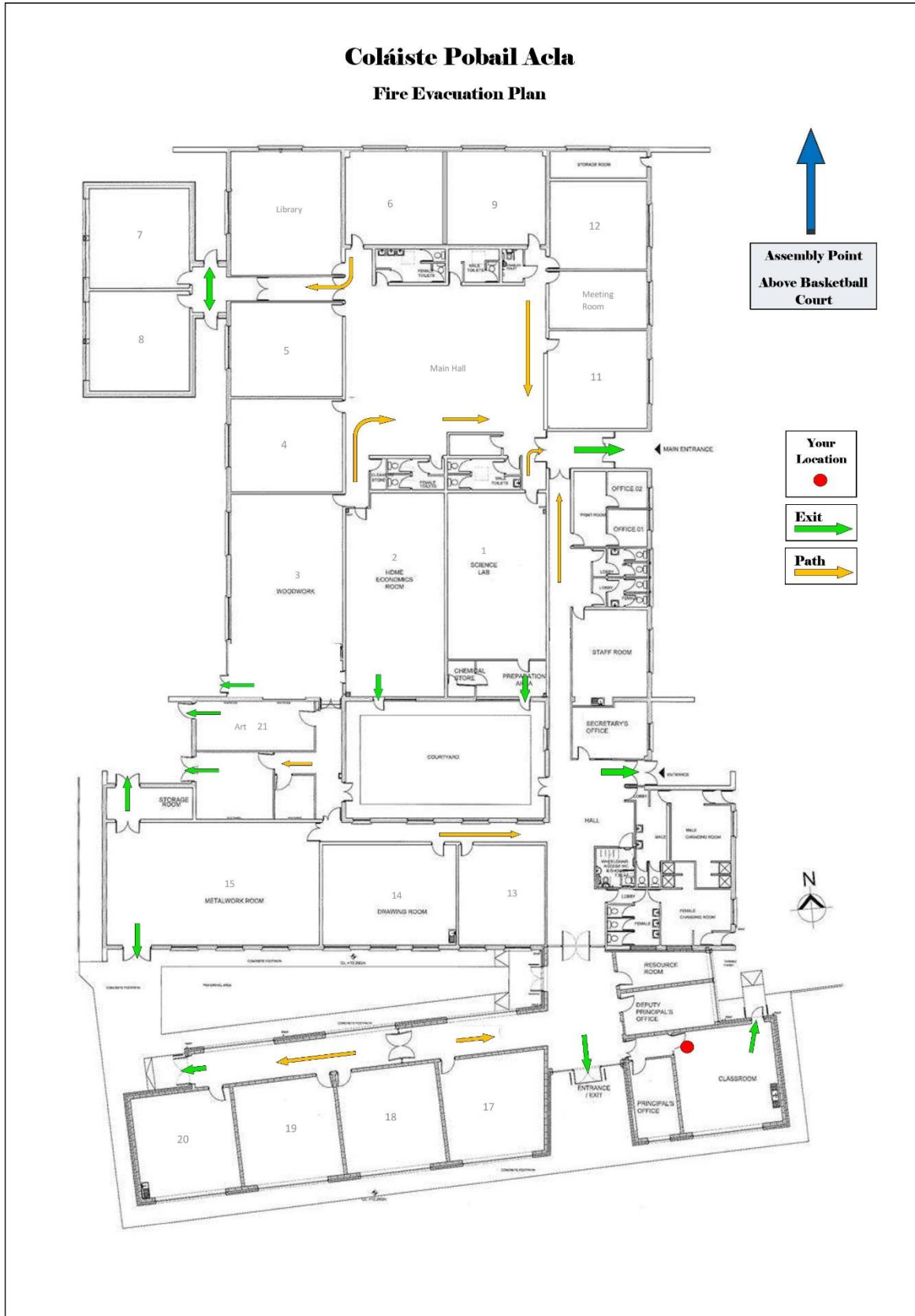
- Defibrillator to be sent as a matter of course in cases of collapse. There is a defibrillator outside the staffroom.
- 999 to be called.
- Emergency response to be outlined to students.
- Exact location of incident to be given.
- Person to be designated to stand at entrance to meet ambulance and family members.
- Once Parents/Guardians have been sent for, siblings to be taken calmly from class and looked after in Principal's office. They should not be allowed to go to scene of incident unless authorised by Principal.

## Appendix 8 – Abbreviations and Acronyms

Below is a list of abbreviations and acronyms used in this policy.

DDLDP	Deputy Designated Liaison Person
DLP	Designated Liaison Person
GP	General Practitioner
HSA	Health and Safety Authority
HSE	Health Service Executive
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
MUGA	Multi Use Games Area
PE	Physical Education
SNA	Special Needs Assistant

# Appendix 9 – Fire Evacuation Plan



## **Appendix 10 - Health and Safety Measures Relating to COVID-19**

### **Introduction**

Coláiste Pobail Acla is fully committed to ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of all members of our school community. This policy recognises the need to minimise the risk of introduction of COVID-19 into the school community and to prevent its spread. Although it is acknowledged that no single action or set of actions will completely eliminate the risk of COVID-19 transmission, adherence to this policy will contribute to the reduction of that risk of transmission.

Students are expected to comply with the standards of behaviour set out in this document or as directed by the school to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19. The COVID-19 control measures are consistent with current advice from the HSE, the Health and Safety Authority, the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Foreign Affairs and, as such, may be subject to change. Students and parents/guardians will be notified of any changes to the control measures.

Students are expected to comply with all directions from school staff in relation to the school's COVID-19 control measures. Any failure or refusal to comply with this policy or to follow instructions of school staff will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

Parents/Guardians are required to supply the school with a phone number/s of available person/s who can be contacted at all times and who will be available to collect a student from the school should the need arise.

### **Symptoms of COVID-19**

Symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to symptoms of cold or flu. The most common symptoms are:

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath
- loss of sense of smell or taste

More information regarding the most up-to-date signs and symptoms of COVID-19 is available on the HSE website, <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>.

### **Standards of behaviour expected of students to help prevent the introduction or spread of COVID-19 in school**

Students are expected to comply with any control measures directed by the school to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19, including, but not limited to:

- maintaining a social-distance of at least 1 metre and where possible 2 metres, from other students and staff;

- wearing a face covering (applicable at post-primary level). All students at post-primary level, are required to wear a face covering subject to a limited number of exceptions set out in relevant Department of Education guidance. Face coverings must not contain any slogans/logos/images that may cause upset or be deemed offensive to any member of the school community;
- performing hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser on entering the school;
- repeating hand-hygiene at regular intervals throughout the school day and when directed by school staff;
- maintaining good respiratory-hygiene. In this regard students should;
  - cover nose/mouth with a tissue when coughing/sneezing and dispose of used tissue in waste bin and perform hand hygiene
  - cough or sneeze into the inner elbow (upper sleeve) rather than into the hand, if no tissues are available
  - keep contaminated hands away from the eyes and nose
  - carry out hand hygiene after contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects/materials
- not spit or deliberately cough or sneeze at or towards any other person in the school
- not sharing materials or stationery, such as pens, calculators, rulers, etc. with other students;
- not attending school for 14 days after returning from travel out of the country in line with Government guidelines for travel;
- not attending school if displaying COVID-19 like symptoms and remaining out of school for such period as is required in accordance with HSE/GP advice;
- not attending school where tested positive for COVID-19 and remaining out of school for such period as is required in accordance with HSE/GP advice;
- not attending school if identified by the HSE as a person who has been in contact with another person who has contracted COVID-19 and remaining out of school for such period as is required in accordance with HSE/GP advice;
- not attending school if a member of the student's household is displaying COVID-19 symptoms and remaining out of school for such period as is required in accordance with HSE/GP advice;
- telling a teacher or other member of staff where a student feels unwell at school. In that regard;
  - the student will require to be collected from the school as soon as possible by a parent/guardian or a person designated by the parent/guardian for such purpose
  - parents must ensure that the school has up-to-date contact details so that they can be contacted by the school if required
- complying with any other such directions as advised by the DES and/or HSE and communicated to the school community.

**Students should be aware that the above is a non-exhaustive list. Students are expected to follow all instructions from staff which aim to prevent the introduction of COVID-19 into the school and minimise its spread.**



### **Failure to Comply with Standards of Behaviour**

Failure by a student to comply with the standards of behaviour set out in this document will constitute a breach of the Code of Behaviour of Coláiste Pobail Acla and he/she may be subject to sanction. Any actions or sanctions taken will be carried out in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

A student engaging in aggressive, threatening or unacceptable behaviour that creates or increases the risk of COVID-19 infection for staff, other students or visitors to the school may be removed from class and, if necessary, from the school premises with immediate effect, pending any further action to be taken in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

## Appendix 11 – Clarification on use of Face Coverings



An Roinn Oideachais  
agus Scileanna  
Department of  
Education and Skills

### **Clarification on the use of face coverings in Post Primary schools**

**(DES, September 2020)**

Wearing a face covering or mask does not negate the need to stay at home if symptomatic.

#### **Wearing of face coverings – a requirement**

Staff and students, at post-primary level, are required to wear a face covering. The exemptions to this are set out below.

#### **Cloth face coverings**

Cloth face coverings are recommended for staff and students. Cloth face coverings act as a barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from travelling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the face covering coughs, sneezes, talks or raises their voice. Cloth face coverings are therefore intended to prevent transmission of the virus from the wearer (who may not know that they are infected) to those with whom they come into close contact.

Face coverings must not contain any slogans/logos/images that may cause upset or be deemed offensive to any member of the school community.

#### **Visors**

Cloth face coverings are more effective than visors. In the limited circumstances where a cloth face covering cannot be worn clear visors must be considered. The alternate use of a clear visor can also be considered when a staff member is interacting with students with hearing difficulties or learning difficulties.

## **Exemptions**

**A medical certificate to certify that a person falls into a category listed below must be provided to the school by, or on behalf of, any person (staff or student) who claims that they are covered by the exemptions below:**

- any person with difficulty breathing who cannot wear a cloth face covering or a visor
- any person who is unable to remove the cloth face-covering or visor without assistance
- any person who has special needs and who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the cloth face covering or visor, for example persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, sensory concerns or tactile sensitivity.

**In circumstances where a medical certificate is not provided that person (staff or student) will be refused entry to the school.**

## **Directions for effective use of face coverings**

- Information should be provided by schools on the proper use, removal, and washing of face coverings. Advice on how to use face coverings properly can be found on <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/aac74c-guidance-on-safe-use-of-face-coverings/>.
- All staff and students should be reminded not to touch the face covering and to wash or sanitise their hands (using hand sanitiser) before putting on and after taking off the face covering.
- All staff (and students, where applicable), should be aware that they should wash or sanitise hands (using a hand sanitiser) before and after helping a student put on or adjust a face covering.
- Face coverings should be stored in a designated space, for example, in an individually labelled container or bag.
- Cloth face coverings should be washed after every day of use and/or before being used again, or if visibly soiled.
- Face coverings should not be worn if they are wet. A wet cloth face covering may make it difficult to breathe.

Whilst staff and students may wish to utilise their own face covering on a day-to-day basis, schools should have a stock of additional disposable or multi-use face coverings (or if appropriate, visors) for staff and students in case a back-up face covering is needed during the day or where required on an ongoing basis.

## **Use of medical grade face coverings**

Schools should consider the specific circumstances where the use of medical face masks (to EU Standard EN 14683) may be more appropriate for staff as part of their risk assessment for employees returning to work (for example where staff by necessity need to be in close and continued proximity with students with intimate care needs such as SNAs).

**Students using school transport**

All students on the post primary transport scheme are required to wear face coverings subject to the exemptions above.