

## **Protocol for school visits of Priests/School Chaplains**

### **Introduction**

*“The Board of Management should facilitate and promote close pastoral links between the local priests and the teachers and pupils of the school. The local priest should visit the school regularly. By arrangement with the Principal Teacher and other teachers, he should be given access to all classes. This should normally take place during the religious instruction period but may be facilitated outside of that time, if necessary.*

*The role of the priest visiting the primary school is essentially a pastoral role. His work will embrace the whole school community, students, teachers and parents. His role is distinct from that of the Board of Management or that of the teacher.*

*In keeping with his pastoral role, he will be available to the staff by way of individual and group discussion. He will seek the cooperation of the staff members in the question of religious worship and apostolic activities.”*

*CPSMA Board of Management Handbook 2016, Chapter 6.*

As schools reopen after a prolonged period of closure, each Board of Management has prepared and adopted a Covid-19 Response Plan that outlines the measures taken by the Board to ensure the school’s safe operation through the prevention, early detection and control of Covid-19.

In accordance with the provisions of the school’s Covid-19 Response Plan, protocols for visits from the school chaplain/priest, should be agreed between the school and the parish to ensure that the Board of Management can continue to promote close pastoral links between the school and the parish, whilst observing the safety measures that have been put in place to minimise the introduction of infection into the school.

The following guidance is based on the Department of Education and Skills publication [COVID- 19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of Primary and Special Schools DES 2020](#)

### **Access to School**

Access to the school building will be in line with agreed school procedures.

Arrangements for necessary visitors is restricted to essential purposes and limited to those who have obtained prior approval from the principal/Board of Management.

To this end, visits to the school should be arranged in advance with the principal, and for the moment, should be limited to essential visits for sacramental preparation, celebration of specific events in the liturgical year and the celebration of Catholic Schools’ Week.

The school chaplain/priest should present at a specific agreed contact point, and must complete the necessary details for the “Contact Tracing Log” that the school is required to maintain.

### **Control Measures - To prevent Introduction and Spread of COVID-19 in Schools**

When entering the building, the school chaplain/priest should perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser.

Hand hygiene should also be performed when entering and leaving a classroom.

The school chaplain/priest will be required to wear a face-covering/visor, whilst on the school premises.

Physical distancing (of 2m) should be maintained between the school chaplain/priest, staff and pupils, where possible.

End