



Covid Response Plan

Procedures and plans for reopening August 26th 2020.

(Updated and revised February 24th 2021)

1. Introduction

Our school Covid 19 Response Plan was drawn up in August 2020. It was revised in February 2021 taking into account new guidelines and procedures as issued by the Department of Education on February 23rd 2021. The initial draft document was drawn up by the In-School Management team. The document was then circulated to the staff for feedback, before being adapted and ratified by the Board of Management. The school has formulated this plan to ensure the safety, health and well-being of all members of our school community – children, parents and staff. Keeping with public health advice and guidelines issued by the DES, all pupils from Junior Infants to Second Class will return to school from Monday March 1st 2021, five days a week, for a full school day. The remaining pupils in third to sixth class will return on Monday March 15th 2021. It is not possible to eliminate the risk of infection. However, with the co-operation of all members of our school community, it is possible to minimise the risk of the virus being introduced to school and the consequent risk of its spread. This is a working document and it will continue to be reviewed and changes made as deemed necessary by Principal, staff or Board of Management.

2. Lead Worker Representative

Lead worker Representative: Marie O Neill

Deputy Lead worker Representative: Aisling Duffy

3. Preventative Measures in School Community






- Staff Training
- Increased cleaning Regime
- Classes in Bubbles (Pods from 3rd - 6th)
- Staff Return to work forms
- Hand Sanitizing Facilities
- Paper Towel Dispensers

- Staggered Yard times
- Increased Signage
- More Spacing
- No unapproved visitors
- Isolation room
- Purchase of PPE for staff
- New Entry/ Exits for each Class bubble



4. Arrival and Dismissal



Front Door	Juniors-2 nd		
Middle Door	3 rd & 4 th		
Lower Door	5 th & 6 th		

Arrival

From Monday March 1st 2021, the children from Junior Infants to Second class will enter the school grounds at the front gate. They will line up outside in their allocated lines on the school yard from 9.10am. There will be 2/3 members of staff supervising the children at this time. We would really like to emphasise the importance of adopting a “drop & go” system. We are asking parents/guardians not to congregate outside the school gate and to please ensure you are adhering to social distancing when dropping your children. We are also asking parents/guardians to wear masks on school grounds. From Monday March 15th 2021, the children from third-sixth class will return. They will enter the school grounds at the lower gate and will line up in their allocated lines, 1m apart on the school yard outside the middle and lower doors.

On very wet mornings we will open the school building @ 9.10am and child will go straight to their classroom where they will be supervised by a member of staff on morning duty.

Dismissal

From Monday March 1st 2021, Junior Infants will exit the main front door @ **1.50pm** with their class teacher Ms O’ Donovan. She will line them up and parents may wait outside the school wall and Ms. O Donovan will send the children out the gate when she can see their parent.

Senior Infants will exit the main front door @ **2.00pm** with their teacher Ms Roycroft. She will line them up and parents may wait outside the school wall and Ms Roycroft will send the children out the gate when she can see their parent.

1st/2nd class will exit the main front door @ **3.00pm** with their teacher Mr O Driscoll and will exit the school grounds at the main front gate.



From Monday March 15th 2021, 3rd/4th class will exit through the middle door @ **2.50pm** with their teacher Ms Burke and will exit the school grounds at the lower gate.

5th class will exit the lower door @ **2.55pm** with their teacher Ms Fitzmaurice and will exit the school grounds at the lower gate.

6th class will exit the lower door @ **3.00pm** with their teacher Mrs. Whelton and will exit the school grounds at the lower gate.

We are staggering the dismissal times at the end of the day to avoid overcrowding at the gates.

**GREAT CARE AND VIGILANCE WILL ALWAYS HAVE TO BE
TAKEN BY ALL PARTIES (STAFF, PARENTS & PUPILS) AT DROP
OFF AND COLLECTION TIMES TO ENSURE PUPIL SAFETY**

5. Yard (Break/Lunch)

As in term 1, we will continue with staggered yard times so that only one class bubble is in each the yard at a time.

As per the DES Guidelines, children can interact with their class bubble (even children not in their pod) during play time as they are outdoors. However, class groups cannot mix, so each class will be on yard at different times in different areas. Classes will enter and exit through their own assigned doors, as with arrivals and dismissals. Children will eat their lunch in the classroom at their table before or after yard depending on each individual class.

6. Special Education

As per DES guidelines, the movement of SETs between classes will continue to be reduced/limited as much as possible. The room (surfaces at which children sat/resources they used) will be cleaned thoroughly by the SET after each withdrawal. If more, than one pupil is being withdrawn from a class, it would be best if they are withdrawn from their pod in the classroom. Pupils should sit at least 1m apart in the SETs room where possible. As per DES Guidelines, supporting the wellbeing of our pupils will continue to be a priority when we reopen in March. The SET working with each class teacher will be invaluable for this to ensure a safe return for all children. The DES Guidelines recommend using the Continuum of Support to document any additional wellbeing supports being put in place for the class / specific pupils.

7. Staff

All staff will need to fill in the updated “*Return to Work Questionnaire.*” This should be completed and returned to school. Any staff who falls into the “Very High Risk” category



and feels they will be unable to return to work, should contact the School Principal ASAP to discuss this.

School staff should download the HSE COVID-19 tracker app to assist Public Health for contract tracing purposes both in and out of the school setting.

All staff **MUST SIGN IN DAILY**. This is for contact tracing purposes and should be done as soon as is possible on arrival and immediately prior to departure. There will be a specific sign-in/out folder for staff and it will be located inside the main school door. It is essential that staff members sign this every day. The Department of Education will be providing training (online) and details of this, when available will be circulated ASAP to staff.

Substitute Teachers and SNAs Substitutes will be required to complete a Return to the Workplace form before they enter a classroom and will be asked to confirm that they have engaged in the online Induction training. They will also be required to sign in and out of the school in the visitor book.

8. Staff Communication / Staff Meetings

All members of staff should check their Aladdin daily, twice a day if possible – in the morning (roll call) and later in the day also, as this will be the main methods of communication for updates for all staff. Staff may communicate with each other and with Paula in the office using their Aladdin Noticeboard (Staff email accounts will be set up in September). This is the preferred method of communication for NON-Urgent messages between staff. If there is an URGENT message that needs to be relayed to another staff member – the Class teacher may deliver the message themselves. Pupils should not be sent on 'jobs' for the foreseeable future. Movement around the school by both pupils and staff should be limited as much as is practically possible. The school hall will be set up with socially distanced seating. Staff meetings will be held online through Google Meet.

9. Staffroom

The school hall has been set up with socially distant seating. Staff may use this area for their breaks. Staff members should take responsibility for cleaning the area they sat in as they leave. Wipes and disinfectant spray will be provided. There will also be socially distant seating in the existing staffroom. A maximum of 2 people can be in this room at the one time. A maximum of 2 persons should be in the kitchen area at the one time. Please be mindful that there will be a few people on their lunch and be as quick as you can. Staff must continue to clean up after their lunch as they had been doing in term 1. Central Supplies of Tea / Coffee will be available as always on the kitchen counters to minimise touching surfaces. Hand Sanitiser is located in the kitchen and a paper towel dispenser to dry hands. It is very important that staff continue to sanitise their hands **BEFORE** and **AFTER** using shared equipment (kettle/microwave). Signage with reminders re: these procedures will be located in



the kitchen. The staff has also been assigned different toilets in the school with a max of 4 teachers per toilet. There is signage in each toilet about different areas that will need to be wiped during the school day.

10. Infection Prevention Control Measures - To prevent Introduction and Spread of COVID-19 in Schools

Staff and pupils are to self-isolate or restrict their movements at home if they display any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 and contact their family doctor to arrange a test. Staff and pupils not to return to or attend school in the event of the following: –

- If they are identified by the HSE as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19
- If they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus
- If they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.
- Staff and pupils to cooperate with any public health officials and the school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice in the event of a case or outbreak in the school;

11. Social Distancing

Social Distancing will be respected by all in our school, where possible. 2m ideally or 1m (as per DES guidelines) should be maintained between all persons, where possible.

Corridors: It is possible to maintain a 1m distance in our corridors. We will all walk on the right hand side of the corridor. The corridors are short enough so that one can look ahead and step in to let another member of staff or a class pass you by. Each Teacher will lead the class when they exit their classroom and look ahead to make sure there is no other class on the corridor at any one time. This worked very well in Term 1 but we will review this and can look at making a one way system through the school if we feel the need to do so. Where practical, all internal doors will be left open to minimise hand contact with common surfaces. (Staffroom, Fr Hurley Hall, Kitchen, Art Store, courtyards)

Classrooms: Bubbles and Pods

Bubble: a class grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible

Pod: discrete groups of 4 or 6 within the class bubble

Juniors- 2nd



Social distancing is not a pre-requisite in Junior Classes as per DES guidelines. However, it is recommended that pupils are grouped into pods and physical interaction is limited between pods. Pupils will remain in these pods as much as possible throughout the school day or for withdrawal for SEN if needed. Toys, books and art materials may be shared within the pods if necessary but will not be shared with other pods in the class bubble. Staff will be provided with PPE for use if social distancing is not possible. Visors and masks have been purchased and made available.

3rd-6th

Following measurements of the 3rd-6th classroom, the children will be grouped into pods within their class bubble. Each pod will be 1m apart, as per the DES Guidelines for the layout of classrooms. The children will be taught about the importance and need of their pod, how to practice and maintain good social distancing in the class bubble between pods. The children in 3rd-6th will be encouraged not to share stationery such as pencils, pencil sharpener, rubber, etc between pods. It is very important that parents ensure their child has everything they need for school each day. Everything needs to be labelled clearly and pencil cases should be checked regularly and topped up if something is required.

12. PPE

PPE will be provided for all staff.

Medical grade masks in the EN16483 category have been purchased for all SNA's and SET teachers. Disposable masks have been purchased and are available for all other members of staff. Visors have also been made available. Visors will be purchased and made available for each staff member to use, should they wish to wear it. Fibreglass screens for on table tops have been purchased for use in 1-to-1 situations (SET) where social distancing may not be possible.

13. Hand/ Respiratory Hygiene

Hand Sanitiser dispensers have been installed outside all rooms in the school and at main entrances and exits. Appropriate signage will be installed at these locations. Dispensers will be topped up regularly (please inform Principal/LWR if running low). Regular hand washing will be encouraged throughout the day in class. There are paper hand towel dispensers in each classroom. Children are encouraged to bring their own toilet bag/zip lock bag with their own hand sanitiser, tissues, facecloth if you wish for them to dry their hands instead of using the paper towels all the time.

Hand washing will take place throughout the school day and especially in the following situations

- before and after eating and preparing food



- after coughing or sneezing
- before and after using the toilet
- where hands are dirty
- before and after wearing gloves
- before and after being on public transport
- After coming in from the yard
- before leaving home
- when arriving/leaving the school /other sites
- after touching potentially contaminated surfaces
- if in contact with someone displaying any COVID-19 symptoms

The HSE video ‘how to wash your hands’ will be made available to all staff and should be shared with pupils. There will be regular reminders of good coughing etiquette, by reminding staff and children, signage etc.

There is a requirement for access to hand washing facilities after activities that are likely to soil hands, for example playing outside or certain sporting activities as hand sanitiser does not work on dirty hands.

Alcohol-based sanitiser must not be stored or used near heat or naked flame.

14. Building/ Health and Safety

Additionally signage is displayed prominently around the school – re: Hand washing, Sanitising of Hands, Social Distancing, Queuing (As necessary).

15. Ventilation

The Department of Education has published guidance setting out the practical steps for good ventilation in accordance with public health advice ‘Practical Steps for the Deployment of Good Ventilation Practices in Schools’. This guidance sets out an overall approach for schools that windows should be open as fully as possible when classrooms are not in use (e.g. during break-times or lunch-times (assuming not in use) and also at the end of each school day) and partially open when classrooms are in use. The guidance provides that good ventilation can be achieved in classrooms without causing discomfort, particularly during cold weather. This guidance has been made available to all members of staff.

16. Cleaning

Each classroom will be provided with a basket of cleaning supplies (Disinfectant spray, kitchen roll, disinfectant wipes, gloves, cloths (5, a fresh cloth for each day), masks, bin bags. There will be a large supply of these available in a central store. As per the DES guidelines all staff should take responsibility for the cleaning of their work area during the day. Staff



will need to tick and initial cleaning logs in classrooms. At the end of the school day 1st -6th class pupils should assist with the cleaning of their own desks by clearing their desks. Class teacher / SET / SNA should spray some disinfectant on to the desk & pupils wipe their desk using provided blue roll tissue. Each classroom & toilets will be cleaned thoroughly after school by the school cleaner. There are cleaning logs in every room in the school building and will be monitored by the LWR and school staff during the school day and again the evenings by the school cleaner.

17. Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19

Staff or pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of COVID-19. The following outlines how a school should deal with a suspected case that may arise in a school setting.

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school the following are the procedures to be implemented:

1. They should be removed immediately from class and accompanied to the isolation room by their class teacher.
2. The class teacher needs to ring the office or another staff member (preferably their SEN teacher) IMMEDIATELY to come and supervise their class.
3. The child and accompanying staff member should put on masks (these will be in a box in each room)
4. The accompanying staff member should check the child's temperature (using the non-contact thermometer) this should be recorded.
5. The accompanying staff member then closes the door and waits outside.
6. A sign is placed on the door to state the isolation room is in use.
7. Parents of the child are immediately contacted and (regardless of temperature) the child should be sent home.
8. If a staff member is feeling unwell (COVID-19 symptom), the same procedure is followed. Staff member is immediately isolated. The Principal/ Deputy Principal discuss/assess if they are well enough to drive home/arrange transport for them.
9. The isolation room (and any other area that the unwell child/ member of staff was in) will be fully disinfected as soon as possible.
10. Carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery.

Arranging for the affected person to leave the school

1. Staff – Have you established by asking them if the staff members feel well enough to travel home?



2. Pupil – Have you immediately contacted their parents/ guardians and arranged for them to collect their pupil? Under no circumstances can a pupil use public or school transport to travel home if they are a suspected case of COVID-19.
3. The affected person should be advised to avoid touching other people. Surfaces and objects.
4. The affected person should be advised to cover their mouth and nose with disposable tissue(s) when they cough or sneeze and to put the tissues in the bin.
5. Has transport home or to an assessment centre been arranged if the affected person has been directed to go there by their GP?
6. Has the affected person been advised not to go to their GP's surgery or any pharmacy or hospital?
7. Has the affected person been advised they must not use public transport?
8. Has the affected person been advised to continue wearing the face mask until they reach home?

Follow up

1. Have you carried out an assessment of the incident to identify any follow-up actions needed?
2. Are you available to provide advice and assistance if contacted by the HSC?

Cleaning

1. Have you taken the isolation area out of use until cleaned and disinfected?
2. Have you made arrangements to clean and disinfect any classroom space where the staff or pupils were located?
3. Have you arranged for cleaning and disinfection of the isolation area and any other areas involved, as soon as practical after the affected person has left the building?
4. Have cleaners been trained in dealing with contaminated areas and supplied with the appropriate PPE? (It is intended to provide online training for cleaning staff. Appropriate PPE will be available to schools through the national procurement process which schools can access before reopening).

The HSE will inform any staff/parents who have come into close contact with a diagnosed case via the contact tracing process. The HSE will contact all relevant persons where a diagnosis of COVID-19 is made. The instructions of the HSE should be followed and staff and student confidentiality is essential at all times.

REMEMBER:

- The virus is spread by droplets and is not airborne so physical separation is enough to reduce the spread to others even if they are in the same room.



- If it is not possible to maintain a distance of 2M a staff member caring for the pupil should wear a face covering or mask. Gloves should not be used as the virus does not pass through skin.
- Provide a mask for the person presenting with symptoms if one is available. He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises.
- Assess whether the individual who is displaying symptoms can immediately be directed to go home/be brought home by parents who will call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home.
- Facilitate the person presenting with symptoms remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and facilitate them calling their doctor. The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. Advice should be given to the person presenting with symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bag provided.
- If the person is well enough to go home, arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible and advise them to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used.
- If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a Covid-19 suspect.

18. Parent Communication

The school website and school Facebook page will be regularly updated. Parents may email/telephone the school office. Parents may contact teachers via email or on Aladdin noticeboard. **Parents will also be asked not to congregate outside school grounds once they have dropped off / collected their child and to leave the area as promptly as possible to avoid congregating or congestion.** Parents will also be advised that pupils cannot attend school for the 14 days following a trip abroad. Homework journal can also be used to communicate with parents; the child may hold it open for their teacher to sign very briefly. Meetings between parents and teacher should be by appointment only and will be held over the telephone or online.

19. School Visitors

Visitors entering the school building will be kept at a minimum. All visitors **MUST** sign the Visitor's Book, which will be located inside the main door no matter how brief they are on premises for. This includes parents who are dropping a forgotten item to the school; there is a box just inside the door. Please clearly label your child's belongings if you need to do a drop off. The Visitor's Book is GDPR compliant. Any visitor who is admitted past the office or



meets a member of staff (other than the secretary) will have to complete a full Contact Tracing Form, when leaving. This Contact Tracing form is based on the template provided by the DES in their recent Guidelines. These forms will be filed securely in the office, for contact tracing purposes. If you are collecting your child early, please write a note if possible in the morning to notify the class teacher. Please wait outside (if dry) the school door. Paula will walk your child to meet you at the school door. You also may ring/email Paula in the office if something unexpected arises and you need to pick your child up early.

20. Office Procedures

Only the school secretary and/or the school principal should enter the secretary's office. You may knock and wait for Paula to answer the door to speak to you from a safe distance. The office will be occupied at all times except during Paula's break (11.10-11.20am, 1.15-1.45pm) Please take these times in to consideration if you are trying to contact the school or if you need to pick up your child early.

The photocopier will remain in the staff room. Please sanitise your hands BEFORE and AFTER you use the photocopier. Staff members may change the paper. But again, please ensure hands have been appropriately sanitised. Wipes will be made available at the photocopier. A maximum of two people can be in the staff room at any one time (STAFF ONLY – no pupils) and should respect social distancing. Further office procedures to follow if necessary.

21. Shared Books/Resources

By necessity, some classroom equipment needs to be shared. Cleaning of such shared equipment with wipes or other cleaning products will take place at regular intervals to minimise the risk of the spread of infection. As per DES Guidelines, shared use of resources will be reduced/limited where possible. Pupils/parents have been asked to provide their own pencils/labelling pencils from stationary list as sharing will not be allowed. In all classes pupil's books/resources/belongings should be stored in individual boxes/cubby holes). Pupils should keep books that have been brought from home (used for homework etc) in their bag, where possible. Pupil's coats should be hung on the back of their chair, where possible. If, in wet weather there are some very wet coats, coat hangers may be used, with appropriate spacing between coats so they are not touching etc. Regularly used class-level specific resources (e.g. a number line, counters etc) should be bagged / boxed exclusively for the use of an individual pupils where possible.

Less frequently used resources may be shared within class pods. After use, resources either need to be washed in warm soapy water, or 'Quarantined'. A quarantine box is available to each classroom for resources requiring quarantining. Once placed in the box these cannot be



used again until the following day. SNA / SET should assist class teacher in re-organising resources when ready to be used again.

Library Books may still be borrowed by children in-class or may be taken home. However as soon as the child is finished with it (either that day, or days later) it should be quarantined in the relevant box and not used by another child until the following day. SNA / SET should assist class teacher in re-organising resources when ready to be used again.

Centrally stored books / Maths equipment etc: If a teacher borrows resources from a central store room (E.g. clocks) – they should keep these for the entire school day. They should then be returned to the central storage area at the end of the school day, where they will quarantine overnight and will be ready for use by another teacher the following day. Please sanitize your hands BEFORE and AFTER you take these from the central store

Chromebooks: Only staff members should collect the Chrome books from the Art store room. There will be disinfectant wipes included in the trolley and they should be wiped before and after every use.

22. Uniforms

Pupils will be expected to wear their school uniform as normal. Information about the school uniform is available on the school website. The “Summer Uniform” – school shorts, baby blue or white polo shirt, navy blue sweatshirts may be worn after the Easter Holidays. (Note: no sports branded or club tracksuit top or bottoms). Runners may be any colour but please ensure they are safely laced/velcroed. It will be more challenging for staff to assist tying laces this year so please make sure to buy suitable footwear for your child’s ability. Teachers will inform parents of tracksuit days as early as possible on return to school. Teachers will make every effort to schedule uniform days & tracksuit days every second day. We strongly advise that children should wear their school uniforms or tracksuits only for school related activities. Uniforms or tracksuits should be taken off straight after the child arrives home from school for the day. They should not be worn in shops or after school activities.

23. Homework

Class Teachers will continue to assign homework as was the case in Term 1.

24. Extra-Curricular Activities / Swimming / Sacraments

As our focus will be on safe return of pupils and teachers to the classroom, and supporting their wellbeing, unfortunately additional extra-curricular activities such as Green Schools, Sciath na Scoil, School Choir, Swimming etc. will not take place for the foreseeable future, especially as these would usually involve pupils from a variety of classes/outside their class bubble. Activities in class groups / bubbles such as PE, SPHE, Music, Science and use of



digital technologies in class will ensure pupils still experience these types of activities. This will be monitored and reviewed in light of experience on a monthly basis.

Sacraments: We have received no information on this but we will keep parents/guardians updated as and when we receive further information

25. Contingency plan for working remotely

We appreciate the time and effort that went into distance learning, and we recognise the challenges that it may have presented for families. We will continue to accept feedback from parents of the most recent (January – March) remote learning.

26. Well-being

Supporting the Wellbeing of Pupils and staff as we return to school again is a priority. The DES document: “Supporting the wellbeing of school communities as schools reopen: Guidance for schools” will be provided to all staff. Key aspects are:

- Promoting a sense of safety – so that people feel that they are safe, and that those around them are safe
- Promoting a sense of calm – so that people feel relaxed, composed and grounded (regulated)
- Promoting a sense of belonging and connectedness – so that people experience having meaningful relationships with others who understand and support them
- Promoting a sense of self-efficacy and community-efficacy – so that people believe that they can manage and do what is needed, and so can their school community
- Promoting a sense of hope – so that people believe that things will work out well

Regular fresh air breaks are encouraged. We are fortunate to have large grounds and outdoor spaces – teachers should consider if the weather is fine activities outdoors – games, reading, read-aloud, SPHE lessons, circle time, wellbeing activities, PE – any other activity that is appropriate for outdoors within the Guidelines. Regular in class movement breaks are recommended outside.

It is important that as a staff we support each other. If any member of staff has a concern, worry, needs support, feels overwhelmed, please talk to a colleague, LWR or approach the Principal.

Conclusion

This Covid-19 Response document is a working document and will be reviewed regularly, based on experience and on changing school circumstances. The Board of Management would like to acknowledge and thank in advance all of our hardworking staff for their

Scoil Mhuire National School, Schull, Co. Cork.
Scoil Náisiúnta Scoil Mhuire, Scoil Mhuire, Co. Chorcaí
info@schullns.com www.schullns.com Tel. 028 28400
Registered Charity Number 20114534 Roll No. 20088F



flexibility, understanding and commitment as we begin to re-open our school. The Board of Management would like to state their appreciation to all members of the school community – staff, pupils, parents etc. – for their co-operation with the procedures outlined in this plan.