



Covid 19 Response Plan – Information for Parents

The school will reopen on:

- Monday March 1st for JIs – 2nd class.
- Monday March 14th for 3rd – 6th class.

I think we will all be glad to leave remote learning behind and get back to school. With the advent of the more transmissible British variant of Covid 19, we will have to redouble our efforts to keep it out of the school or else risk having to return to remote learning.

Staff will need to complete a Return to Work form before returning to school.
Parents will need to complete a Return to Education declaration using Aladdin Connect.

We will need to return to the August 2020 attitudes of great caution, vigilance and awareness. We also need to review our day to day practice as some changes will be necessary, including:

- Reducing the capacity of the staffroom
- Improving the practice of ventilation in the staffroom, classrooms, and other shared areas.
- Sending home any child who displays symptoms of Covid 19.
- Strictly implementing hand hygiene routines and rules.
- Strictly implementing bubble and pod rules
- Strictly implementing lunch rules – no sharing, eating off the lunchbox lid, etc.
- Utilising Seesaw at least once a week in case of another lockdown. This is to ensure that children retain their knowledge of the platform.

Yard zones will be alternated as was planned for after Christmas.

The same timetables will be in operation as before Christmas.

Timetable for Group A (Junior Infants – 2nd Class)	Timetable for Group B (3rd Class – 6th Class)
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<p>9.05 – School start</p> <p>10.40 – Break time</p> <p>10.50 – Class resumes</p> <p>12.00 – Lunch time</p> <p>12.30 – Class resumes</p> <p>1.45 – Infant classes finish</p> <p>2.45 – 1st and 2nd classes finish</p>	<p>9.05 – School start</p> <p>11.00 – Break time</p> <p>11.10 – Class resumes</p> <p>12.40 – Lunch time</p> <p>1.10 – Class resumes</p> <p>2.45 –Classes finish</p>
Classes in Group A	Classes in Group B
<p>JI – Ms. Wall</p> <p>SI – Ms. Laffan</p> <p>1st – Mr. Moore</p> <p>2nd – Ms. Shannon</p>	<p>3rd – Ms. Breen</p> <p>4th – Ms. Morris/Ms. Swan</p> <p>5th – Ms. Miskella</p> <p>6th – Mr. Coffey</p>

Hygiene and Cleaning

Sanitiser dispensers will be installed throughout the school e.g. at each entrance, at the door of each classroom, etc. Soap (which emulsifies at low temperatures) and water is available in all classrooms and toilets. Hand hygiene will be promoted and encouraged, and parents/guardians are asked to support the school in reinforcing this message.

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.



Handwashing and Sanitising Regime for Children

Time	Method
Upon entering school	Sanitiser
Before eating at little break	Handwashing
After returning from the yard	Sanitiser (wash hands if visibly dirty)
Before eating at big break	Handwashing
After returning from the yard	Sanitiser (wash hands if visibly dirty)
Before going home	Sanitiser
*After using toilet	Handwashing

In accordance with the DES guidelines, the school will be thoroughly cleaned at least once per day. Particular attention will be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, handrails, chairs/arm rests, desks, coffee machines, sink and toilet facilities.

All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area. Waste will be collected daily by our cleaner.

Changes to Classroom Layouts

The DES guidelines recognise that a common-sense approach is needed in our primary schools. To that end, every effort will be made to limit interaction within classrooms, to limit contact between class groups and to limit the sharing of common facilities.

The children and their teachers will work in class bubbles. A class bubble is a grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible. The aim of the system within the school is that class groupings mix only with their own class - from arrival at school in the morning until the children go home at the end of the school day.

It is recognised that younger children are unlikely to maintain physical distancing indoors so there is no requirement for children from junior infants to 2nd class to maintain a physical distance within their class bubble.

Children from 3rd class to 6th class will be distanced insofar as is practicable, with approximately 1m distancing achieved in all rooms. Teachers will modify their classrooms to create as much space as possible.

To facilitate the larger numbers, Mr. Moore's 1st class will be situated in the classroom used by Ms. Shannon last year, and vice versa.

Learning Support



In keeping with our special educational needs (SEN) policy, learning support will be provided by a blended approach of in-class and withdrawal support. Initially, the focus will be primarily on welcoming the children back, giving them a chance to speak about how they feel, and establishing relationships and routines. The provision of support will be organised to ensure our support teachers will work within the confines of the minimum amount of class bubbles.

- Where a support teacher is working alongside a class teacher in a classroom, both teachers must be mindful of maintaining social distance from one another.
- Where children from receive support in one of the SEN rooms, social distancing of 1 metre will be maintained between each child in the group. Only pupils from the same class bubble may be withdrawn together for SEN purposes
- The tables and chairs in SEN rooms will be wiped clean in between different groups attending. Where possible, resources in SEN settings will be stored in individual pouches for each child in order to limit sharing, and the pouches can then be wiped and sanitised.
- SNAs will continue to provide support and will wear appropriate PPE. They will bring the children outside as much as possible.

Supporting the Learning of Children who Cannot Attend School

Children with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical doctor not to attend school, and who produce written evidence of this, will be supported in accessing the curriculum by the relevant class SENT in liaison with the class teacher.

Children who do not attend school but who cannot produce written evidence of direction by a medical doctor not to attend school, will not be supported in the fashion above.

Entrance and Exit Points for Specific Classes

To facilitate pupils arriving with pupils entering and exiting the grounds safely, we ask that no pupils be present on school grounds before 9am. From 9 to 9.20, staff will be supervising at the lay by and main pedestrian entrance. Over this period, pupils can enter the school grounds through their designated gate and proceed directly to their class, where their class teacher will be waiting for them.

Key to Entrances and Exits

Entrance and Exit Points	Number
Gates at front of school	1
Door to carpark (hitherto unused)	2



Main door at reception	3
Door leading out onto ramp and yard	4
Exit door onto yard from Ms. Shannon's room	5
Exit door onto yard from Mr. Moore's room	6
Exit door opposite 4 th class	7
Exit door opposite principal's office	8
Exit door opposite PE store	9

Entrance and Exit Points for Specific Classes

Teacher	Class	School Building Entrance and Exit Point	School Grounds Entrance and Exit Point
Ms. Wall	Jun. Inf.	4	1
Ms. Laffan	Sen. Inf.	4	1
Mr. Moore	1 st Class	5	1
Ms. Shannon	2 nd Class	6	1
Ms. Breen	3 rd Class	3	2 (exit at 1)
Ms. Morris/Ms. Swan	4 th Class	7	2
Ms. Miskella	5 th Class	8	2 (exit at 1)
Mr. Coffey	6 th Class	7	2



Yards

The yard and field will be divided up into four zones. Each group (A and B) will have access to their class zone on the yard during their allotted break times as follows. They will also have access to their allocated zone on the school field if it is in use. Children will use the field unless it is very wet.

Basketball Court		Infant Yard	
2 nd Class	1 st Class	SIIs	JIs
A	B	C	D

Basketball Court		Infant Yard	
6 th Class	4 th Class	3 rd Class	5 th Class
A	B	C	D

Pupils from the same class can play freely with each other but physical contact will be kept to a minimum where possible. Each break will be supervised by one teacher and the SNA/s assigned to the classes on yard.



Outdoor Classroom

The children will have access to the outdoor classroom at lunchtime on a weekly basis.

Outdoor Classroom Rotas

Lunchtimes

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Junior Breaktimes	Jls	Sls	1 st	2 nd	1 st Friday of the month – 2 nd 2 nd Friday – 1 st 3 rd Friday – Sls 4 th Friday - Jls
Senior Breaktimes	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	1 st Friday of the month – 6 th 2 nd Friday – 5 th 3 rd Friday – 4 th 4 th Friday – 3 rd

Outside of Lunchtimes

Check that it's free – then it's on a first come, first served basis. But finish on the hour e.g. if you use it at 1.15 pm make sure you finish by 2pm.

Yard Supervision

Teachers and SNAs will be assigned to a class cohort (A or B) and will supervise that cohort according to the yard supervision schedule. Teachers in the junior half of the school will supervise the junior cohort and teachers in the senior half will supervise the senior cohort. The principal and deputy principal will supervise the two cohorts in the mornings. They will supervise the relevant cohorts every seventh week (instead of every sixth week - a change from previous practice due to the increased supervision).

Lunches

Pupils will be given time to eat lunch in class as usual. We will be asking parents to remind pupils to eat directly from their lunch boxes, and not to use the surface of the table to place their food on. Please remind children that sharing of food is not permitted. Lunch boxes and drinks bottles should be washed thoroughly, inside and out, each day.

PE

Where possible, PE should take place outdoors and use of equipment should be confined to the sets that have been distributed to class groupings. Classes may take additional breaks outside during the school day.



Pupils' Equipment and Stationery

- In so far as possible, it is requested that children will bring their own pens, pencils, colours, rubbers, etc. to school in their own pencil case to avoid the sharing of equipment. This should be kept in school and separate items should be kept at home for homework as necessary.
- It is further requested that all items have the child's name on them for ease of identification.
- For children in Junior and Senior Infants, the school will provide a pouch or container which will hold each child's pencils, crayons, etc. and which will be labelled with their name.

Shared Equipment

By necessity, some classroom equipment needs to be shared including tablets, laptops and the equipment used for structured activities and play in infant classrooms. 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.

PPE

The Department of Education advise that facemasks should be worn by all staff who cannot maintain a 2m social distance from pupils. The BoM is supplying all staff with the personal protection equipment they will need. Gloves and aprons will also be provided for providing intimate care or first aid. Schools must provide medical grade masks in the EN16483 category to all SNAs and teachers in special schools and special classes and those staff by necessity that need to be in close and continued proximity with pupils with intimate care needs including School Bus Escorts.

Swimming

Swimming will not take place this school year.

Ventilation

Where practical, all internal doors will be left open to minimise hand contact with common surfaces. To ensure that classrooms are well ventilated, windows will be kept open as often as possible. The 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.

Assembly

Whole school assemblies will take place via Teams.

Payments

We have an online payment system that minimises the amount of cash that needs to be handled. Parents/guardians are asked to co-operate in helping to keep school staff safe by arranging for online payments through the school office.

Wet Days

On wet days the classes will remain indoors as normal. The teacher on duty will supervise from the classroom door and only enter the room if absolutely necessary. Senior classes will stay in their pods.

Corridors

Briefly passing someone in a hall is very unlikely to contribute significantly to the spread of infection if people do not have physical contact and avoid informal group discussions. We will teach the children to keep to the right when on the stairs and in the corridors.

Teacher Absence and Substitution

In the event that teacher is unable to attend school, every effort will be made to secure a substitute teacher for the class. If a substitute teacher is not available, a SEN teacher will supervise the class. The class will not be divided into groups and accommodated in other classes. If we cannot source a supervising teacher, it may not be possible for the class to attend on that day. If that is the case, as much notice as possible will be given to parents.

Collection of Children during the School Day

If an adult has to collect a child during the course of the school day, the following arrangements will apply

- When the adult arrives at the school, they should either phone the office or use the intercom at reception to alert the office that they have arrived. Only two people can be in the reception area at any one time, and they must wear masks. Please check the number of people in the reception area before entering.
- The child will be brought from their class to the adult by a member of staff.
- The adult who is collecting will be asked to sign the child out.



- No adult can enter the school building from the reception area, unless invited to do so.

Children Who Should Not Attend School

If your child is in one of the following categories, they should not attend school –

- Children who have been diagnosed with Covid-19.
- Children who have been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with Covid-19.
- Children who have a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending.
- Children who have been in contact with a person who has a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending.
- Children with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school.
- Children who have returned home after travelling abroad and must self-isolate for a period of 14 days.
- Children who are generally unwell.

Impact of a Suspected or Confirmed Case of Covid-19 in a Class

If the school is notified that a person in your child's class has a suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19

- The parents of all children in the class will be notified.
- Public health advice will be sought and followed.

Illness and Absences

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

- Staff and pupils should 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 should 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 should 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.
- Staff should:
 - Not to return to or attend school in the event of the following:
 - 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.
 - Cooperate with any public health personnel and their school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice given in the event of a case or outbreak in their school
 - Undergo any COVID-19 testing that may be required in their school as part of mass or serial testing as advised by Public Health

Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19

Pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19. Mark Kelly will be responsible for ensuring that all aspects of the protocol to deal with suspected cases have been adhered to.

If a pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while in the building, the following are the procedures will be implemented:

- Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately – please ensure all contact details are up to date and in use, and also provide the name and number of a contact who will be in a position to collect a child promptly.
- The child will be accompanied to the designated isolation area via the isolation route by a member of staff. The staff member will remain at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic child and will also make sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic child at all times
- A mask will be provided for the child 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
- An assessment will be made as to whether the child who is displaying symptoms can immediately be brought home by parents and call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home



- The school will facilitate the child presenting with symptoms to remain in isolation, if they cannot immediately go home, and will assist them by calling their GP.
- The child presenting with symptoms should be advised to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and to put the tissue in the waste bag provided
- If the child is well enough to go home, the school will arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible, and advise them to inform their GP 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, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick child is a Covid-19 suspect.
- Arrangements will be made for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms. They are:

- High temperature
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- Loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste

If a child in your class/ a colleague is diagnosed with Covid-19, the HSE contract tracing process will be activated. Contact tracing identifies people who were in close contact with someone who has coronavirus. The HSE states that “A close contact can mean someone who has spent more than fifteen minutes of face-to-face contact within 2 metres of an infected person in any setting”. Schools are required to keep a list of visitors to schools for the purposes of contact tracing. Staff should be encouraged to download the [Covid Tracker](#) app to assist in the identification of close contacts.

What Happens if a Child or Teacher is diagnosed with Covid 19?

If you have had such contact with a confirmed case, the HSE [contract tracing team](#) will contact you through a call from a contact tracer, or an alert through the Covid-19 tracker App. They will arrange a test for you and advise you to restrict your movements for 14 days. If you are advised by the HSE that you should [restrict your movements](#), you should



not attend work, and will be on Covid-19 – Restricted Movement leave, as per [Circular 49/20](#).

In a letter to all schools on 10th March, the Chief Medical Officer advised school principals that “Public health authorities will contact schools if there is any action to be taken in relation to your school and students. You should not take unilateral action.” Schools should remain open unless there is clear public health advice that they should close.

Children with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school.

Parents should seek advice from their GP/consultant if they think their child is in a high risk group. If they are advised not to attend, then the parents should furnish the school with a letter containing words to this effect. The school will then support the child with his/her learning.

FAQs for Parents

What is happening with homework? From March 1st, JIs – 2nd class will not have homework for the first week. The staff will review the week and then make a decision regarding homework for the next week.

Can I send in a bottle of sanitiser with my child? Yes, but please remind your child it is for personal use and it may only be used with the permission of the teacher. Regulations stipulate that children should not have independent use of containers of alcohol gel.
Children must sanitise before entering the classroom – no exceptions.

Can my child wear a facemask? It is not recommended that children attending primary school or preschool/childcare settings wear face-coverings. But we won't ask children to remove appropriate facemasks.

Will staff be wearing facemasks? Yes, at times. And possibly visors also.

Will parent/teacher meetings be taking place? The P/T meetings took place by phone in January. Parents can always contact their child's teacher by phone or email if they need to discuss an issue.

What if I need to speak with my child's teacher? Please contact Melissa in the office or your child's teacher via email. Please do not write notes in the journal.



What happens if my child's teacher is out sick? Every effort to find a substitute will be made. If one cannot be found, the SEN teachers will be asked to supervise the class. If we cannot supervise the class, we may have to send the children home.

What happens if my child forgets their lunch or drinks? The school will contact you so you can drop one to the school for your child.

My child has hay fever and sneezes quite a bit, will he/she be sent home? If your child has an underlying condition such as hay fever (as many of us have) please make sure the class teacher is aware.

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms. They are:

- High temperature
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- Loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste

What if my child is sent home with a suspected case of Covid 19? We would advise that you contact your GP/HSE for further advice. If a child is unwell they should under no circumstances be sent back to school.

Are parents permitted in the school building? No, not unless collecting a pupil presenting with Covid 19 symptoms or have received prior permission and have been invited in from the reception area.

My child is in a "pod" with some other children, can they still play with their other classmates at break time? Yes, absolutely, when out in the yard. On wet days, the children will remain in their pods. But they can still chat with children in other pods as long as they keep the distance between the pods.

Are 3rd to 6th classes in "pods"? At the start of the school year we will be distancing pupils as much as possible, with approximately 1m between all students. This will not eliminate pupils from interacting with each other or prevent talk and discussion. Pods will be alternated after Christmas and Easter.

What happens if my child falls on yard/gets a bump or cut? Our first aid policy will be followed, but staff are required to wear PPE to apply first aid.



Why can some of the classes not mix? They are playing soccer/GAA together anyway! That may be the case for some of the pupils, but our procedures are governed by Dept. of Education guidelines, which state that every effort must be made to limit the amount of contact between “bubbles”. We do not adhere to the guidelines of other sporting /social organisations.

Will teachers talk to the children about Covid 19? Yes, from day one we will be re-teaching cough etiquette, hand hygiene, reinforcing the idea of social distancing/reduced physical contact, and chatting (in an age appropriate way) about Covid 19. The aim will be on reassurance and promoting calmness and safety.

Will the children wear their uniform? Yes, it is business as normal in relation to uniform. There is no guidance from the Department of Education or HSPC to the contrary. Junior and senior infants will wear their navy school tracksuit every day, however. And it is probably good practice for children to take off their uniforms as soon as they arrive home.

Will after school activities be taking place? No, not at the moment.

Will the school be cleaned each day? Yes, and all staff will monitor their rooms to ensure safe practices are applied.

What will be the most difficult issue for schools and parents? When children display symptoms of Covid 19. We will have to ring you and you will have to come and collect your child immediately. Your child will have to be brought to the isolation area. These are the government guidelines.

We are not qualified to make a distinction between Covid 19 symptoms and symptoms of other illnesses. Be prepared. Make arrangements for your child to be collected in the event of a phone call.

Will this document be updated? Yes. Latest update – March 2021. It is an evolving situation and we will most likely have to change elements of it when we observe it in practice. We will be reviewing our procedures constantly.