

# Covid-19 Response Plan for the Safe and Sustainable Reopening of Primary and Special Schools

## Fanore National School

### August 2021

A revision of the COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable operation of Fanore National School was necessary to ensure that it is in compliance with the Government's Resilience and Recovery: Plan for Living with COVID-19 and the 'Work Safely Protocol'.

Drop off and Collection

- Supervision by class teacher will start from 9.10am.
- Drop off will be at the front gate, maintaining 2m social distancing. At pickup time, parents remain in their cars or outside the school grounds maintaining social distancing. Junior room children will remain in their classrooms and their teacher will call them out when their parents/guardians arrive.
- Junior room children will use the main door for entry and exit. Senior room children will now use the door with the ramp for all entry and exit.

### Collection of children during the Day

- In order to pick up a child during school hours, it is necessary to telephone the school first. The teacher will let the child out once the parent/guardian arrives to the school gate. Please refrain from entering the school premise.

### Parents and visitors

- There will be no access to the school or classrooms for parents or visitors without prior arrangement with the class teacher or principal. Essential visitors only will be allowed into school by appointment. All essential visitors must wear a face covering and complete contact-tracing log before being allowed entry.
- Parent-Teacher meetings will take place in the portacabin.

### Hygiene and cleaning

- Hand sanitisers will be in place in all classrooms and hallways. Children will be required to use these on arrival each morning and when leaving each day. There will also be assigned times during the day which will become established parts of our school routine e.g. coming in from break and lunch times etc.
- Warm water, soap and paper towels will be available in pupil and staff toilets.
- Hand hygiene, correct respiratory etiquette (coughing into elbow and sneezing into tissues) will be promoted and encouraged. Parents/guardians are asked to support the school in reinforcing this message at home.
- All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area.
- The school will be cleaned at least once per day. Particular attention will be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, handrails, chairs, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities.
- Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day.
- Class bins will be emptied each day or more often if necessary.

### 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'. Windows will be open as fully as possible when classrooms are not in use e.g. during break-times and also at the end of each school day for a period of time.
- When classrooms are in use, windows will be partially open without causing discomfort, particularly during cold weather.
- Doors - where practical, all internal doors will be left open to minimise hand contact with common surfaces and to aid ventilation
- CO2 monitors will be supplied to schools in the coming weeks.

## **PPE**

- It is now a requirement for face coverings to be worn by staff members where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres from other staff, parents/guardians, essential visitors or pupils.

## **Classroom and School Routines**

### **Bubbles and Pods**

- Within the Covid-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable operation of Primary and Special Schools, the Department of Education/Skills guidelines refers to classes as Bubbles and groups within classes as Pods. A Class Bubble is a grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible. The children and their teachers will work in Class Bubbles. 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.
- Each classroom will form one bubble with internal pods arranged as necessary by class teachers. A list of pods will be written and displayed. Physical distancing is not required for the children in the junior room. Pods have been arranged; however, pupils will mix occasionally during the school day. There will be no interaction of the bubbles allowed during the school day or at break times. Children must stay within their class bubble at all times.

### **Breaktimes/lunch times**

- To adhere to the separation of bubbles, break times/lunchtimes will now be staggered in to 2 20 min breaks. Bubble 1 {Jnr Rm} will use yard first, and then Bubble 2 {snr room} will be allowed out. **No mixing of the children across bubbles will be allowed.**

### **Use of Toilets**

- Each bubble has now been assigned a toilet unit. Children in the junior room will use the toilet unit beside their classroom. Senior room children will use the toilet closest to them. Within each toilet unit there will be an allocated toilet for girls and boys. Only one child will be permitted at any one time to use the unit.

### **Special Education Teacher (SET) and Special Needs Assistant (SNA)**

- Staff members may need to rotate between area/classes. This will be minimized where possible, however when rotation occurs, agreed sanitising routines will be observed.
- Where the support teacher is working alongside a class teacher in a classroom, both teachers must be mindful of maintaining social distance from one another.
- The tables and chairs in SET rooms will be wiped clean in between different pupils or small groups attending.

## **School Activities**

## **School belongings**

- Pupils should have their own dedicated school books. Textbooks/library books that are shared will be covered in a plastic covering that can be wiped with a suitable household cleaning agent between uses/ use of quarantine period.
- Each child will be equipped with their own zip lock bag containing school essentials that will be left in school at all times including some art supplies.
- Childrens' school bag & lunchbox should be kept clean and clutter free. Only essentials are to be brought to school.

### **Electronics**

- Each child has their own individual iPad in bubbles. I pads will be wiped down by teachers after use when shared between bubbles.
- Laptop use - will be wiped down by teachers after use.

### **Musical Instruments Choir/Singing**

- Individual instruments will be provided for each student and will be labelled accordingly. Where shared instruments are necessary between rooms, siblings will share and cleaned between uses. When singing, special consideration will be given to ventilation and distance between pupils.

### **Shared Toys**

- By necessity, some classroom equipment needs to be shared e.g. the equipment used for structured activities and play in the junior room. 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
- Soft modelling materials and play dough are for individual use only.

### **Supporting the Learning of Children who cannot attend school**

- If a child is not able to attend school for an extended period of time, suggested activities to support the child's learning at home will be shared with parents by the class teacher and/or the learning support teacher where relevant.

### **Teacher Absence and Substitution**

- In the event that a 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, it is not appropriate for the class to be divided into groups and accommodated in other rooms. In such circumstances, 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.

## **DEALING WITH A SUSPECTED CASE OF COVID-19**

- Pupils or Staff should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19. Common symptoms of Covid -19 include:
  - A fever (high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above).
  - A new cough - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry.
  - Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties.

- Loss or change in your sense of smell or taste – this means you’ve noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

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

- Parents/guardians of pupils will be contacted immediately
- The child will be accompanied to the designated isolation area via the isolation route (outside and using senior room entrance) 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. He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises .
- The school will facilitate the child presenting with symptoms to remain in isolation, if they cannot go immediately home.
- The child presenting with symptoms will 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.
- Arrangements will be made for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.
- 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 pupil confidentiality is essential at all times.

**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 to Ireland after travelling from abroad or moved to Ireland from abroad, must self-isolate for a period of 14 days in accordance with current government guidance.
- Children who are generally unwell.

**Staff Duties**

Staff have a statutory obligation to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of their colleagues and other parties. The cooperation and assistance

of all staff is essential to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 and to protect health and safety as far as possible within the school. All staff have a key role to play. In this regard and in order to facilitate a safe return to work, staff will:

- Adhere to the School COVID-19 Response Plan and the control measures outlined.
- Complete the RTW form before they return to work.
- Inform the principal if there are any other circumstances relating to COVID-19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to facilitate their safe return to the workplace.
- Complete COVID-19 Induction Training and any other training required prior to their return to school.
- Be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices.
- Coordinate and work with their colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained.
- Make themselves aware of the symptoms of COVID-19 and monitor their own wellbeing.
- Self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any symptoms of COVID-19.
- Not return to or attend school if they have symptoms of COVID-19 under any circumstances.

Not return to or attend school in the event of the following:

- if they are identified 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.
- Adhere to the procedure above if they develop any symptoms of COVID-19 whilst within the school facility.
- Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.
- 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 as part of mass or serial testing as advised by Public Health

### **Lead Worker Representative**

- The Protocol provides for the appointment of a Lead Worker Representative (LWR) in each workplace. The LWR will work in collaboration with the employer to assist in the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of COVID -19 and monitor adherence to those measures and to be involved in communicating the health advice around COVID-19 in the workplace.
- The process for appointment of the lead worker representative in schools has been agreed centrally between the Department of Education and the education partners.
- Responsibility for the development, updating and implementation of the COVID-19 Response Plan and the associated control measures lies primarily with the Board of Management and school management.

- If a staff member has any concerns or observations in relation to the COVID-19 Response Plan, control measures or the adherence to such measures by staff, pupils or others he/she should contact the lead worker who will engage with the BOM.

### **Role of the Lead Worker Representative**

- Represent all staff in the workplace regardless of role, and be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of different staff cohorts;
- Work collaboratively with school management to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19;
- Keep up to date with the latest COVID-19 public health advice;
- In conjunction with school management, promote good hygiene practices such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette along with maintaining social distancing in accordance with public health advice;
- Assist school management with implementing infection prevention control measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace in line with the Work Safely Protocol and current public health advice;
- In conjunction with school management, monitor adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19;
- Conduct regular reviews of safety measures;
- Report any issues of concern immediately to school management and keep records of such issues and actions taken to rectify them;
- Consult with the school management on the school's COVID-19 Response Plan in the event of someone developing COVID-19 while in school including the location of an isolation area and a safe route to that area;
- Following any incident, assess with the school management any follow up action that is required;
- Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace;
- Make representations to school management on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.

Lead Worker Representative - Carol Scales

Deputy Lead Worker Representative - Breda Coyle

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.

As well as co-operation, the flexibility and goodwill of all will be required to ensure the plan can be implemented.

All of staff, parents, pupils and us have an obligation to take reasonable care for our own health and the health and safety of our community. The cooperation and support of all is essential to reduce the risk of spreading Covid 19. All of us have a role to play, be patient as change takes time and understanding.

This plan was first ratified by the Board of Management in August 2020. It was reviewed and updated on September 2020 and again in February 2021. It is a living document and is subject to change in accordance with updated public health guidance.

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_