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### **School Profile**

201

8 Mainstream classes

2 special classes catering for children with ASD

4 Special Education Teachers (1 shared with another school 5 days per week, 1 shared with another school 1.2hours per week, bulked)

Administrative Principal

10 SNA posts

Part Time Secretary

1 Fulltime and 1 part time secretary

The biggest classroom in the school is 80 metres squared (including toilets).

Toilets and sinks are located within each of the mainstream classes.

There is a sink in main SET room.

There are no toilets or sinks in the library/music room (currently being used as classrooms)

There are two toilet blocks located on the first floor, one exclusively for staff and one for children.

There are two blocks of student toilets on the ground floor, these will be used by the 6<sup>th</sup> class children in September and then will be used for break time usage thereafter.

There is one sink available off of the main hall in the servery area.

There is a sink available in the staffroom.

There is a sink available in the cleaners room downstairs.

### **Additional Challenges**

Only one entrance/exit to the school building (pedestrian entrance and main staff car park entrance)

No on-site parking for parents/guardians

### **Human Resources allocated through additional funding from DES**

Aide – 2 days

Deputy Principal – 5 Leadership and Administration Days

### **Assumptions**

School will re-open for all pupils on Tuesday August 31<sup>st</sup> 2021

### **Key Dates**

#### **Week beginning Monday 16<sup>th</sup> August**

Finalise Covid-19 Response Plan

Ensure staff, especially new staff receive all up to date DES information and training

Ensure that LWR receives new training

#### **Week beginning Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> August**

Publish Covid-19 Response Plan to school community

Organise BOM, ISM and Staff meetings to monitor progress against tasks. Encourage all staff members take some time for themselves and their families this week.

Some staff on site to finalise arrangements

#### **Week beginning Monday 30<sup>th</sup> August**

Monday – all staff on site for staff meeting and final preparations

Tuesday – welcome all children back to school

### **Usual School Hours**

8.50-1.30p.m Infants

8.50-2.30p.m. First to Sixth

Under normal circumstances parents/guardians have access to the school yard both before and after school.

### **Drop Off and Collection Times (staggering)**

*To help with reducing the amount of traffic around the school gates, children are asked to walk/cycle/scoot to school if it is at all possible.*

Where possible children are encouraged to walk into the school grounds by themselves.

We need to reduce the number of bodies entering the school grounds significantly at this time.

We appreciate that children in Junior and Senior Infants may need parents to drop them closer to school entry points initially **but where possible children should be dropped at the pedestrian gate.**

If you must enter the school grounds please follow the one-way system which will be in operation on the yard. **All adults and over 13s must wear a mask once on the school grounds.**

Enter via the pedestrian gate, follow the signs and exit via the staff car park gates.

**Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES can anyone (other staff members) drive into this car park for safety reasons.**

Unfortunately, it will not be possible for parents/guardians to come beyond the basketball court area before/after school. This area will be clearly marked with signage.

We will be making use of all our entry points this year.

Acorn/Oak classes will be entering via the main entrance door.

Junior Infants and Senior Infants and 5<sup>th</sup> class will be entering via the beach side door.

6<sup>th</sup> class will be entering via the first hall entrance door

1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> class will be entering via the second hall entrance door.

3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> class will be entering via the hillside door.

To minimise the risks, and to help us to maintain social distancing the following arrangements are applicable.

**If a parent needs to collect a child early/drop a child late due to an appointment please inform the relevant class teacher in advance and email the office at [office@ballybunionprimary.ie](mailto:office@ballybunionprimary.ie) so that arrangements can be made by a staff member to collect in a safe manner.**

**Parents (or those dropping/collecting) please DO NOT congregate in groups on the school yard. It is natural that people will gravitate towards each other at these times but we are asking everyone to maintain a distance of 2 metres from anyone that is not part of your family bubble.**

**We will ask people to disperse if we see this happening so please help us in this regard.**

### **Morning:**

All class teachers will be in their classrooms by 8.40a.m awaiting the arrival of the children.

Parents are asked to 'drop and go' between 8.40a.m. and 9.00a.m. If entering the school grounds please wear a mask and observe social distancing of at least 2metres and follow all signage.

Children will go directly to their classrooms on arrival. Other staff members (including Special Education Teachers, SNAs and the Deputy/Principal) will be available outside and inside the building to receive the children and to help them to their classrooms.

Staff members will be going directly to class at 9.00am and will not be available thereafter. Therefore please ensure that you child/ren are in school by 9.00am at the latest.

### Afternoon:

**Due to the lack of space outside of the pedestrian gate we have decided that the evening collection point will be at the top of the staff car park i.e. the large rectangular area between the car park and the basketball court**

**This area will be divided into three sections to aid collection times.**

*(Special arrangements will be put in place for Junior Infants for the first few weeks of the school year)*

#### **From 13<sup>th</sup> September onwards:**

1.30p.m. Class teacher will bring **Junior Infants** to the collection area. Parents are asked to 'pick up and go' until 1.40p.m.

#### **From August 31<sup>th</sup> onwards:**

1.30p.m. Class teacher will bring **Senior Infants** to collection area. Parents are asked to 'pick up and go' until 1.40p.m.

2.20pm Class teachers and/or SNAs will bring the children from the ASD classes (1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class) to the main entrance door where they will exit to their collection point on the front yard. Parents are asked to 'pick up and go' until 2.30pm.

2.25p.m. Class teachers will bring First, Second and Third Class to the collection points on the front yard. Parents are asked to 'pick up and go' until 2.30p.m. Families that have children in Fourth, Fifth or Sixth Class **as well as in First, Second and Third Class**, may collect all their children at this time.

2.30p.m. Class teachers will bring Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Classes to the school gate. Parents are asked to 'pick up and go'. Supervision will be provided until 2.40p.m.

As many of our older children walk home by themselves, there should not be as many adults arriving for pickups at this time.

**\*\*\*If your child is walking home or has permission to walk unescorted to the church car park you must provide us with a written notice to this effect.**

**Parents are asked to wear a mask and to maintain a social distance both inside the school grounds and outside the school gate.**

**This system will apply rain, hail or shine so please make sure that your child comes to school prepared for the weather!**

### **Summarised Timetable for Drop Off and Pick Up**

8.40	All staff to be present to support arrival of pupils
	Class teachers to be in their classrooms
	SETs, SNAs and Principal to support arrival of pupils

8.40-9.00	Arrival of pupils – Stop, Drop, Go system. Children to go straight to their classrooms on arrival.
1.30	Stop, pick up go – Junior Infants
1.30	Stop, pick up, go – Senior Infants
2.25	Stop, pick up go – First, Second and Third class
2.30	Stop, pick up go – Fourth, Fifth, Sixth

### **Breaktimes**

The DES guidelines state that the risk of transmission from contact with outside surfaces or play areas is low.

**10.30-10.40** Break for Junior Infants (back yard, near amphitheatre) and Senior Infants (back yard, near the shed)

**10.50-11.00** Break for 1st (back yard near amphitheatre) and 2<sup>nd</sup> class (back yard middle) and 3<sup>rd</sup> class (back yard near the shed)

Break for 4<sup>th</sup> class (front yard near car park), 5<sup>th</sup> class (remainder of front yard) 6<sup>th</sup> class (court front yard)

### **Lunch**

**Please note that the children eat in their classrooms for 10mins either before or after their lunch yard time (at the decision of the class teacher and their class timetable)**

**12.15-12.35** Break for Junior Infants (back yard, near amphitheatre) and Senior Infants (back yard, near the shed)

**12.40-1.00** Break for 1st (back yard near amphitheatre) and 2<sup>nd</sup> class (back yard middle) and 3<sup>rd</sup> class (back yard near the shed)

Break for 4<sup>th</sup> class (front yard near car park), 5<sup>th</sup> class (remainder of front yard) 6<sup>th</sup> class (court front yard)

You will notice that there are intervals between breaktimes, this is to allow all children to line up and return to classrooms before the next class(es) make their way outside.

### **Yard Supervision**

A rota will be organised based on Class Bubbles and the SETs allocated to those classes.

### **Changes to Classroom and School Layout and to School Routines**

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.

### **Team Teaching/Special Education Teachers/Special Needs Assistants**

We are hopeful that our Acorn and Oak rooms can integrate with their class groups this year.

Staff members (particularly Special Education Teachers and SNAs) can rotate between areas/classes but this will be minimized where possible. When rotation occurs, agreed sanitising routines will be observed.

In keeping with our Special Education policy, learning support will be provided by a blended approach of in-class support and withdrawal. The provision of support will be organised to ensure our support teachers will work as far as possible, within the confines of a bubble.

- 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.
- The tables and chairs in SET rooms will be wiped clean in between different pupils or small groups attending.

Children will be arranged in Pods within their Class Bubbles, with a maximum of 6 pupils per Pod. As far as possible, each Pod will be at least 1 metre distance from the next Pod. All unnecessary furniture will be removed from these classrooms to create as much space as possible. Sneeze guards will also be in place.

Parents are asked NOT to request changes to the pods unless in essential circumstances.

### **General Purpose (GP) Room**

**Until our modular unit arrives 6<sup>th</sup> class will be using the GP hall (for at least the month of September).**

Thereafter the GP Room will be used in limited circumstances. As all children will be wearing their tracksuit every day this will help to facilitate timetable of hall usage between classes.

The GP hall will also be used for entrance and exit pathways (see above)  
Windows must be fully open at all times during PE lessons in the GP hall.

### **Corridors and Stairwells**

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.

However, we will be asking that children refrain from talking/shouting on their way to and from the classrooms.

We will observe our usual practice of keeping to the left when on the stairs and in the corridors. Children will be reminded to keep a social distance in their lines.

### **Additional Measures to Limit Interactions**

Children will go straight to their classrooms from the yard and will not congregate in the corridors or hallways.

While we will all be delighted to see each other again, hand shaking and hugging will not be allowed.

### **Doors and Windows**

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, and will be fully opened while children are taking breaks in the playground and in the mornings/evenings before and after school.

Windows should be opened fully when children are singing as a group, or when they are playing musical instruments. Tin whistles should not be shared between pupils.

Monitors are in place in all classrooms which monitor CO2. Colour indicators allow easy visual references for when additional ventilation might be necessary.

### **Coat storage and toilets**

Additional coat hangers are now in places for all classes. Children may also place their coats on the back of chairs at the discretion of the class teacher.

Water heaters have been upgraded in the school to ensure sufficient heat to help kill the virus when washing hands with soap and water.

Hand sanitisers are available on the sink areas outside of classroom toilets.

### **Lunches**

Parents must make sure that children bring their lunches to school to avoid adults having to come to the school during the day. Please remind your children not to share their food or drinks with other children.

Children will eat their lunches at their desks, as per our usual practice.

If your child is NOT availing of the Carambola lunches OR if they are bringing additional food to school this **must be placed in a paper bag** which should be disposed of at the end of every day.

Following consultation with our regional Inspector and in line with our desire to remain a Green School any remaining/uneaten food or waste products will be returned to your child's school bag at the end of the day. PLEASE ensure that your child's bag is cleaned out EVERY NIGHT.

### **Our water dispensers will NOT be in operation.**

Your child must pack sufficient water daily to suit their individual needs.

### **Books, Copies, Pencils, etc.**

Children should use their own books, pens, pencils, etc. and as far as possible should not share with other pupils.

**We are asking that the stationery list (i.e. their pencil case) attached to your child's booklist be left in school. A second set of stationery should be kept at home for homework completion.**

### **Uniforms/Tracksuits**

There is no guidance from the DES at present to say that school uniforms or tracksuits should be washed every day and this is probably not practical for most families.

When washing uniforms it has been suggested to wash them at 60 degrees.

As a school we strongly advise that children should wear their school uniform tracksuits **only for school related activities.** Uniform tracksuits should be taken off straight after the child arrives home from school for the day. They should not be worn in after-school facilities, shops, during after-school activities, etc. Showering after school has also been recommended.

### **Office**

A contactless payment system has been set up to minimise 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 contactless payments through the school office.

Children should not be sent to the Secretary's Office or to the Reception area to deliver messages.

As far as possible, staff members should not enter the Office area and should speak with the Secretary at the Reception area.

### **Photocopying.**

Any staff member who uses the photocopier should clean it down after use with the wipes provided.

### **ICTs**

A timetable will be drawn up for the use of common ICT devices. Devices should be cleaned after use and before they are returned to the charging trolley.

### **Visiting Teachers/Coaches**

The possibility of facilitating extra-curricular activities such as Dancing, Coaching for games, Safe Cycling course, etc. will be explored further in term 1 this year.

At present however, we will not be including any extra curricular activities as we have been advised by the DES to continue as per last year.

### **Substitute Teachers and SNAs**



A copy of the Covid-19 Response Plan will be provided to each substitute teacher/SNA. 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.

### **Physical Education and P.E. Equipment**

Physical Education lessons will take place outside when the weather allows.

Staff members and pupils may take additional breaks outside during the school day. Classes are encouraged to participate in 'The Daily Mile'.

### **Parent/ Teacher Meetings**

Parent/Teacher Meetings will take place via phone in line with practice last year. The feedback received from both parents and staff was very positive.

### **Staffroom**

All staff members should maintain a physical distance of 2 metres when they are not engaged in teaching e.g. when they are using the staff room and arriving to work. If 2m cannot be maintained in staff groups, face coverings must be worn. Maximum numbers apply for seating.

Staff meetings will be held remotely or in small groups or in large spaces to facilitate physical distancing.

Staff members should bring their own cups, bottles, cutlery, etc. to school and avoid sharing utensils in the staffroom as far as possible.

### **Teaching and Learning**

#### **Homework**

Teachers will not be assigning homework for the first two full weeks at school. School books were available for collection August 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. These books should be covered, labelled and returned to the school on the first day back at school. Teachers will make individual decisions in relation to homework from September 13<sup>th</sup> onwards. Decisions will be made in relation to what books will remain at home/in school and how to keep everyone safe in this regard.

We will continue to follow last year's format for homework.

Homework will be assigned on Monday for the entire week. Homework folders will be sent home with assigned work on Monday and will not return to school until Friday morning where it will be quarantined for 72 hours and corrected.

#### **Supporting the Learning of Children who Cannot Attend School**

If a child is not able to attend school **for an extended period of time**, the class teacher (and/or the Special Education Teacher, where relevant) **may** provide work to support the child's learning at home and this will be shared with parents/guardians. **Please see Q&A information provided by the INTO, below, in relation to this.**

The majority of parents have downloaded the Aladdin Connect App which will be used by staff this coming academic year as our main form of communication. If you have not already downloaded the app please do so ASAP.

Please note we will not be responding to any messages on the Facebook forum going forward. We have found that there are too many ways to contact us at the moment and we risk missing out on an important message.

Please use the following emails for any queries you might have

For general school/admin queries email [office@ballybunionprimary.ie](mailto:office@ballybunionprimary.ie) this includes queries in relation to Carambola lunches, Aladdin Connect, calendars, books etc

For uniform queries email [deputy@ballybunionprimary.ie](mailto:deputy@ballybunionprimary.ie)

For COVID specific queries please contact our LWR Mrs Anne Larkin [set@ballybunionprimary.ie](mailto:set@ballybunionprimary.ie) (Please note this email is used by all SET team members)

For individual class teacher queries email:

[acornclass@ballybunionprimary.ie](mailto:acornclass@ballybunionprimary.ie)

[oakclass@ballybunionprimary.ie](mailto:oakclass@ballybunionprimary.ie)

[juniorinfants@ballybunionprimary.ie](mailto:juniorinfants@ballybunionprimary.ie)

[seniorinfants@ballybunionprimary.ie](mailto:seniorinfants@ballybunionprimary.ie)

[firstclass@ballybunionprimary.ie](mailto:firstclass@ballybunionprimary.ie)

[secondclass@ballybunionprimary.ie](mailto:secondclass@ballybunionprimary.ie)

[thirdclass@ballybunionprimary.ie](mailto:thirdclass@ballybunionprimary.ie)

[fourthclass@ballybunionprimary.ie](mailto:fourthclass@ballybunionprimary.ie)

[fifthclass@ballybunionprimary.ie](mailto:fifthclass@ballybunionprimary.ie)

[sixthclass@ballybunionprimary.ie](mailto:sixthclass@ballybunionprimary.ie)

The special education team are available at [set@ballybunionprimary.ie](mailto:set@ballybunionprimary.ie)

If your query is urgent/serious or if you would like the query brought to the attention of the Principal as well as the class teacher please cc the principal at the following email

[principal@ballybunionprimary.ie](mailto:principal@ballybunionprimary.ie)

### **Wellbeing of the School Community**

We will work on the recommended five principles to support the wellbeing of all our pupils and staff. These are promoting:

- A sense of safety
- A sense of calm
- A sense of belonging and connectedness to school
- A sense of self-efficacy and school-community efficacy
- A sense of hope

Our usual practice is to provide support to pupils based on what is known as the Continuum of Support. This is a tiered system that provides Whole School and Classroom Support for all pupils, additional School Support for some pupils, and School Support plus extra targeted intervention for a few pupils with complex needs.

### **The Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Staff members are not required to wear PPE. However, for a limited number of staff, PPE will need to be used occasionally or constantly due to the nature of certain work activities or work areas. This might include roles such as:

- Assisting with intimate care needs
- Where a suspected case of COVID-19 is identified while the school is in operation
- Where staff are particularly vulnerable to infection but are not on the list of those categorised as people in very high-risk groups or may be living with those who are in the very high-risk category.
- When staff members have to move between classrooms to support children with learning needs.

Appropriate PPE will be available for dealing with suspected COVID-19 cases, intimate care needs and for first aid. Where staff provide healthcare to children with medical needs in the school environment, they will apply standard precautions as per usual.

### **Masks**

The guidelines now recommend that all staff and children from 3<sup>rd</sup> class upwards wear masks. **Some other children may wish to wear face coverings this is at parental discretion.**

Some exemptions apply. Please see guidelines from the Department of Education for further information.

If a child from 3<sup>rd</sup> class upwards arrives without a mask they will be given one to wear. Failure to comply with this provision could lead to a child being removed from the school (under health and safety guidelines and failure to adhere to our school's code of behaviour.)

Staff members will be provided with medical grade masks weekly.

Staff are asked to wear their own cloth mask (or disposable mask) AND the N95 mask daily.

### **Gloves**

There is no need for the children to wear disposable gloves. They are considered inappropriate under the guidelines.

Staff members do not need to wear disposable gloves unless they are looking after a pupil's intimate care needs or administering First Aid or handling bin bags at the end of the day.

There will be an emphasis on hand hygiene rather than on the wearing of disposable gloves.

### **Hygiene and Cleaning**

Sanitiser dispensers have been installed throughout the school e.g. at each entrance, in each classroom.

Warm water and soap is available in all toilet and sink areas.

Hand hygiene will be promoted and encouraged, and parents/guardians are asked to support the school in reinforcing this message.

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, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities.

**All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area.** Under no circumstances should these cleaning materials be removed from the building. **Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day.**

Waste will be collected regularly from offices and other areas within the school.

Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.)

### **Illness and Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19**

We love to see all of our children at school every day. However, under the current circumstances, parents/guardians **must** keep children at home if they display **any** Covid-19 Symptoms. <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/symptoms.html>

**Staff must not attend school if they display any symptoms.**

Children/staff must not return to school until the symptoms are completely gone and/or a COVID test has proved negative. A GP letter will be required for any return of less than 48 hours.

A designated isolation area has been created in the back hall, near the hillside rear exit door.

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, the following procedure will be implemented:

The pupil will be accompanied to the isolation area. A distance of 2 meters will be maintained where possible. The person accompanying the child must wear a face covering.

If a pupil has a suspected case, parents/guardians will be contacted immediately by telephone. **To help us in this regard, parents are asked to make sure that their contact details are kept up to date at all times.** It is extremely important that additional contacts are provided to us should you be uncontactable for any reason.

You can edit your contact details via the Aladdin app at any time.

Staff members who are symptomatic should immediately inform the Principal/Deputy Principal (via telephone) and go to the isolation area.

A face covering will be provided to the staff member/child who is symptomatic. **If your child is exempt from wearing a mask for any reason, this must be notified to the school in writing.**

The staff member or child who is symptomatic should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects.

If the staff member/child is well enough to go home, arrangements will be made for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible.

Anyone who is symptomatic is advised to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used to travel home.

If the staff member/child is too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a Covid-19 suspect.

The isolation area and work areas will be thoroughly cleaned in line with the guidelines.

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.

It is important to remember that any of us can get sick or unwell, and if we do, we need understanding and support from those around us. It is essential that anyone who feels unwell makes that known to the Principal/Deputy Principal as soon as possible.

### **COVID-19 Related Absence Management**

COVID-19 related absences will be managed in line with agreed procedures with the Department of Education.

### **Teacher or SNA Absence and Substitution**

If a teacher/SNA is unable to attend school, every effort will be made to secure a substitute teacher/SNA for the class/pupil. If a substitute teacher/SNA is not available, it is not appropriate for the class/pupil to be divided into groups and accommodated in other classes. In such circumstances, it may not be possible for the class/pupil to attend on that day. If that is the case, as much notice as possible will be given to parents.

### **Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme**

Support for school staff wellbeing will be provided by Department Support Services including the PDST and CSL, as well as by the HSE's Health Promotion Team.

An Occupational Health Strategy is in place as a supportive resource for staff in schools. The aim of the Occupational Health Strategy is to promote the health and wellbeing of employees in the workplace, with a strong focus on prevention.

The Occupational Health Strategy comprises the Employee Assistance Service and the Occupational Health Service. The Employee Assistance Service (EAS) is provided by Spectrum Life under the logo of 'Wellbeing Together: Folláinne Le Chéile'.

A free-phone confidential helpline 1800 411 057 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and staff members are encouraged to make use of the service when the need arises.

### **Tasks Identified to Date**

		Completed
Review and communicate the school's Covid-19 Response Plan	BOM in consultation with Staff and Parents	27.08.2021
Appoint LWR and DLWR	Staff	17.08.2020 (continued)
Provide Return to Work Forms to all staff	Principal	23.08.2021 (via email)

Provide links to training	Principal	23.08.2021 (via email)
Complete and return RTW forms	All staff	By 30.08.2021
Complete Induction training	All staff	Completed before 30.08.2021
Draw up list of PPE in advance of procurement process	Aide	25.08.2021
Purchase required PPE	Aide	25.08.2021
Arrange for installation of sanitising units, provision of PPE to staff and provision of cleaning materials to staff.	Aide	07.08.2020 (checked August 21)
Display signage	Aide	07.08.2020 (checked August 21)
Investigate contactless payments system	Secretary	July 2020 In situ for Academic year 21/22
Investigate internal intercom system	Principal	Already installed
Arrange for installation of water heaters, extra hand dryer	Principal/Caretaker	Already installed and checked 07.08.2020
Create Isolation Area	Caretaker	07.08.2020
Erect 'safe area' for Reception	Caretaker	07.08.2020
Review of S,H and W Policy and Covid-19 Risk Assessment	BOM	Ongoing
Plan for coat racks	Staff	Delivered week 31.08.2020
Agree timetable for SETs and SNAs	SETs/SNAs/All staff	Ongoing
Agree sanitising routines for SETs/SNAs moving between Pods or Class Bubbles	SETs/SNAs	30.08.2021
Provide Notes to all school staff	LWR	Ongoing
Agree classroom layouts	All staff	30.08.2021
Timetable for ICTs and plan for sanitisation	ISM Team member	30.08.2021
Plan for provision of ICT needs to pupils in case we need to return to Home Learning	ISM Team member	Staff meeting held 30.08.21
Staffroom – arrange for social distancing.	Staff member	TBC 25.08.2021
Plan for a visit to the school by incoming Junior Infants	Class teacher and Principal	All parents and new entrants were given the opportunity/option to visit the school in June (and August) 2021 as 'previous' first day at school procedures would

		contravene H&s guidelines
Arrange for collection of 6 <sup>th</sup> Class belongings	Principal	June 23 <sup>rd</sup> 2021
Organise and distribute Book Rental books to classrooms	SNA team with P and DP	16 <sup>th</sup> and 17 <sup>st</sup> August 2021
Agree daily timetable to include staggered breaks	Staff	30.08.2021
Agree supervision rotas	Staff	30.08.2021
Agree and plan for morning drop off and afternoon pick up routines	Staff	30.08.2021
Plan for the possibility of remote learning if the school/part of the school is advised to close by HSE	All staff	TBC 30.08.2021
Plan for how P/T meetings, General Information Meetings might take place.	All staff	Discussed 23.08.2021
Arrange cleaning and sanitisation of the building before school re-opens	BOM/Principal	Throughout July and August and ongoing daily
Plan for the management of substitutes	Principal/DP/Secretary	Whatsapp group created, part of Listowel Convent Primary school cluster
Plan for enhanced daily cleaning routines	DP	Ongoing
Plan for Teaching and Learning – September, October	All staff	Ongoing planning
Plan for Staff and Pupil Wellbeing	BOM, ISM Team	Ongoing

Information provided by the INTO (further information is available at [www.into.ie](http://www.into.ie) )

**Q: Is a school expected to provide adapted education for children who are not at 'very high risk' to Covid-19 but are anxious about returning to school?**

- A. No. Pupils and parents who are experiencing a high level of anxiety, to the extent that they choose not to return to school, should receive support and reassurance from the school. It is understandable that some parents will harbour an element of concern as children return to schools following a prolonged absence, but schools can assure parents that they have been provided with guidelines from the DES in relation to class size management, implementing social distancing etc. to ensure a sufficiently safe learning environment. Parents can access these guidelines, which are based on public health advice and informed by best practice internationally at [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie). The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) have developed resources for parents, pupils and teachers on anxiety. NEPS will be available to advise schools on how best to support pupils and parents in this cohort. Pupils identified as at risk of early school leaving should also be supported in the usual manner and schools are not expected to use adapted education provision / remote learning. TUSLA Education Support Service

(TESS) have indicated that they will prioritise supports for schools in relation to return to school and school attendance for children in this category during the months of September and October. TESS have also devised a useful set of Frequently Asked Questions for parents which can be accessed on their website.

**Q.Are pupils who are learning from home marked absent on the school roll?**

A. Children who hold a medical certificate stating that they are at 'very high risk to Covid19' and are therefore instructed to remain at home, as per public health advice, should be marked present. **All pupils other than those in the 'very high risk to Covid-19' group will only be marked present when they attend school.**



### **Face coverings in Primary schools**

**NPHET has recommended the wearing of face masks/coverings by children aged nine years and above on public transport, in retail and other indoor public settings as already required for children**

**aged 13 years and over. They have also recommended that this is introduced for children in 3rd**

**class and above in primary schools. They have advised that this measure is being introduced on a**

**temporary basis and is subject to review in mid-February 2022.**

### **Guidance on face masks/coverings in Primary schools**

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

### **Wearing of face masks/coverings**

**Pupils from third class and up in primary schools are required to wear a face mask/covering. The**

**exemptions to this are set out below.**

### **Face masks/coverings**

**Face masks/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 mask/covering coughs, sneezes, talks or**

**raises their voice. Face masks/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 masks/coverings must not contain any slogans/logos/images that may cause upset or be**

**deemed offensive to any member of the school community.**

### **Visors**

**Face masks/coverings are more effective than visors. In the limited circumstances where a face**

**mask/covering cannot be worn clear visors must be considered.**

### **Exemptions**

**A medical certificate to certify that a person falls into a category listed below must be provided to**

**the school on behalf of, any person (pupil) who claims that they are covered by the exemptions**

**below:**

- any pupil with difficulty breathing or other relevant medical conditions**
- any pupil who is unable to remove the cloth face-covering or visor without assistance**
- any pupil who has special needs and who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the**

**cloth face covering or visor, for example pupils with intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, sensory concerns or tactile sensitivity.**

**Schools will be best placed to identify those children whose complex needs are such that the**

**wearing of face covering may not be possible for them, and to discuss this with parents as**

**required. In such circumstances a school may not require medical certification to provide an exemption to the wearing of face coverings. In other circumstances where a medical certificate is**

**not provided that person (staff or pupil) will be refused entry to the school.**

**Directions for effective use of face masks/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 here.**

**All pupils 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.**

**Face masks/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 masks/coverings should not be worn if they are wet. A wet cloth face covering may**

**make it difficult to breathe.**

**Pupils using school transport**

**Pupils from 3rd class and up on the primary transport scheme are required to wear face**

**masks/coverings subject to the exemptions above.**

**Mixed classes in single rooms**

**Where there are mixed classes, e.g. 2nd and 3rd class in a single classroom, schools should note that**

**only children in 3rd class and above, are required to wear face masks. As per previous advice,**

**however, parents of other children who would prefer that their children wear a face mask are not**

**precluded from doing this.**

**Provision of face masks**

**Parents should be advised that they obtain face masks for their children which fit properly and are**

**comfortable for the child to wear. In the event that a child forgets, loses or damages their masks**

**during the course of the school day, then the school should have a sufficient supply to replace the**

**mask for the child in case a back-up face covering is needed during the day or where required on an**

**ongoing basis.**

**01 December 2021**

**Dear Parent/Guardian,**

**The ongoing efforts by parents and children to adhere to the public health advice during this pandemic has been fundamental to our work to drive down the incidence of COVID-19 in the community.**

**Our priority continues to be to minimise risk and protect as many people as possible from severe illness. As you are aware, the National Public Health Emergency Team monitors incidence of COVID 19 in all age cohorts and environments on an ongoing basis. In a very short period of time, we have seen a significant and rapid deterioration in the epidemiological situation, and a resultant very high incidence in the as-yet-unvaccinated 5 – 11-year old age group. This is a cause for some concern.**

**Schools are at the heart of our communities and they play a fundamental role in the social lives and wellbeing of our children; this is particularly true for children who have special educational needs, are disadvantaged or who may have been disproportionately impacted by school closures during the pandemic. It is therefore imperative that we move quickly as soon as we notice a significant change in incidence.**

**In addition to the general public health advice to reduce discretionary social contact and for at least the next two weeks, the following events and activities should be avoided:**

- Indoor birthday parties and play dates – these should take place outdoors and should be kept small**
- Sleepovers**
- Indoor community gatherings involving children including communions, confirmations, nativity and other seasonal events**

**Further to this, parents should:**

**Not let children attend school or creche if they have any symptoms of COVID-19.**

**Help them to isolate at home and arrange a PCR test straight away.**

**Reduce their own contacts. This means work from home unless it is essential to attend the workplace in person, it also means making difficult decisions to avoid indoor social gatherings.**

**Meet others outdoors where possible.**

**Wear a mask if you cannot keep a distance from others.**

**Ensure that your child wears a mask if it is recommended for them.**

**If anyone in your household is symptomatic, they should isolate and get a PCR test.**

**You**

**should not use or rely on the results of an antigen test if you have symptoms**

**If your child is a close contact of a case in school, you may be asked to use antigen tests,**

**supplied by the HSE, as an additional tool. If any stage your child develops symptoms of**

COVID-19 or an antigen test is 'positive' they should be isolated at home and parents should arrange a PCR test for them.

One in five young adults are not yet vaccinated, please consider vaccination for any older children in your household not yet protected

I am keenly aware that these measures are not what any of us want to hear, particularly at this time

of year. I know this is an additional burden at what has been a very difficult time for all of us,

particularly those of us with young families.

That being said, parents have a key role to play in reducing transmission within and between

households. At this time of year, young children often display respiratory symptoms, and we know

that it gets increasingly difficult to isolate and arrange PCR tests repeatedly. But this remains an

essential measure to protect families and the wider community.

When incidence of disease is as high as it is at the moment across the country, it means that the force

of infection is pushed down through the unvaccinated population and into our unvaccinated young

children. While we know that most in this age group will experience a very mild form of this disease

if they pick it up, for a small few, they may become severely ill. I am hopeful that if we all make a

concerted effort to follow these measures for at least the next two weeks, we can make a real

difference to incidence of disease in this cohort and in the wider public.

NPHE has recommended, on a temporary basis, the wearing of face masks for children:

Aged 9 years and over on public transport, in retail and other indoor public settings as

currently required for those aged 13 and over, with exemptions as appropriate; and

In third class and above in primary school (guidance will issue to schools from the Department of Education on this).

This measure will be subject to review by NPHE in mid-February 2022.

I would also like to note that vaccines are doing an excellent job of preventing severe illness and

disease in those who are fully vaccinated. This is really good news, and I welcome the European

Medicines Agency (EMA) authorisation of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine for primary school going

children (5-11 years). We anticipate receiving further advice from the National Immunisation

Advisory Committee (NIAC) in the near future.

Many thanks for your continued effort to keep our schools and our wider communities safe.

Yours Sincerely,

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**Dr Tony Holohan  
Chief Medical Officer**

**Why is the public Health Advice Changing?**

**The measures being announced today are proportionate, to maintain control of the virus, suppress its further spread and to avoid further restrictions.**

**Incidence of COVID-19 is the second highest it's been since this pandemic began. The only time it**

**was higher was in the second week of January this year.**

**This means that there is so much infection in the community, it is that little bit harder to avoid**

**picking up this virus.**

**Vaccines are doing an excellent job of preventing severe illness and disease in those who are fully**

**vaccinated; this is good news, and we expect an update on vaccines for primary school going**

**children (5-11yrs) in the near future, from the EMA and subsequently NIAC.**

**1 in 3 children between the ages of 12 and 15 years are yet to come forward for vaccination, and 1 in**

**5 between 16 and 18 are yet to come forward. It is important that anyone who is eligible for a**

**vaccine come forward to get it as soon as possible.**

**It does however mean that the force of infection is pushed down through the vaccination-eligible**

**population and into our unvaccinated young children.**

**While we know that most in this age group will experience a very mild form of this disease if they**

**pick it up, for a small few, they may become severely ill.**

**What is the updated advice for parents?**

**Parents have a key role to play in reducing transmission within and between households. We know**

**this is an additional burden at what has been a very difficult time for all of us, particularly those of us**

**with young families. At this time of year, young children often display respiratory symptoms, and we**

**know that it gets increasingly difficult to isolate and arrange PCR tests repeatedly. But this remains**

**an essential measure to protect families and the wider community.**

**Protecting our education system is one of our key priorities. For at least the next two weeks, we can**

**do this by cutting down on our socialisation in other settings.**

**Therefore, parents should:**

**Reduce your own contacts. This means you should work from home unless it is essential to**

**attend the workplace in person, it also means making difficult decisions to avoid indoor social gatherings.**

**Meet others outdoors where possible.**

**Wear a mask if you cannot keep a distance from others.**

**Do not let your child attend school or creche if they have any symptoms of COVID-19. Help**

them to isolate at home and arrange a PCR test straight away.

If anyone in your household is symptomatic, they should isolate and get a PCR test.

You

should not use or rely on the results of an antigen test if you have symptoms.

If your child is a close contact of a case in school, you may be asked to use antigen tests,

supplied by the HSE, as an additional tool. If at any stage your child develops symptoms or an

antigen test is 'positive' they should be isolated at home and you should arrange a PCR test

for them.

What is the updated advice for children?

Masks should be worn by children:

Aged 9 years and over on public transport, in retail and other indoor public settings as

currently required for those aged 13 and over, with exemptions as appropriate; and

In third class and above in primary school.

Unfortunately, we need to ask children to meet fewer friends over at least the next fortnight. This is

a really tough thing to do, as this includes many of the events and activities that our young adults

and children enjoy the most. For at least the next two weeks, these events should really not take

place at all:

- Indoor birthday parties and play dates – these should take place outdoors and should be

kept small

- Sleepovers

- Indoor community gatherings involving children including communions, confirmations,

nativity and other seasonal events

If you are arranging a birthday party or a play date, this should be with a maximum of one other

household and should take place outdoors. No one with symptoms should attend these events.

Children with any symptoms of COVID-19 should not go to creche or school. They should stay at

home and parents should arrange a PCR test as soon as you can.

As we have said time and time again, we can protect ourselves, even if we are unvaccinated or have

yet to come forward for vaccination by continuing to follow the public health advice.

We know this

works and that, together, we can break the chains of infection.