



St Patrick's NS

Covid 19 Response Plan for the Safe Opening of our School Updated and Reviewed August 2021

Underlying Principles

- The school has a responsibility to make every effort to ensure the safety, health and well-being of all members of our school community – children, parents and staff. This plan has been formulated to better ensure that the school can exercise that duty of care.
- Assuming it is in keeping with public health advice and guidelines issued by the Department of Education and Skills, it is preferable for all children to return to school for all five days of the school week and for a full school day. This plan has been formulated to achieve that aim.
- **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.

Assumptions

- School will open for Staff on Monday 30th August 2021
- School will open for pupils on Tuesday 31st of August 2021.
- All children return to school and classes operate within a bubble system
- The school is split into 2 groups with each group having different starting times, break times, lunch times and finishing times.
- Groups will be constituted of Junior Infants to Second Class and Third to Sixth Class.
- The day will include 1 x 10-minute break 1x 30minute break
- Within each class the children will be further divided into pods, with a minimum distance of 1 metre being maintained between pods.
- Hand sanitiser will be available at entry points, in all class and support rooms.

Role of parents

It is important that parents have a clear understanding of the benefits and risk of the school setting and that it is not possible to guarantee that infection can be prevented in any setting either in school or in the home.

It is advisable that parents check their child's health each morning before school.

Under no circumstances is a parent to bring a child to school:

- if the child is exhibiting any symptoms of Covid-19
- if the child has a temperature, is sneezing, coughing, who has been vomiting or has diarrhoea.
- if the child has been in contact with any family member and or other person who has Covid-19.
- If you are in any doubt whether you should send your child to school or not, please err on the side of caution.
- We would ask that all pupils are taught proper hand washing and coughing etiquette before they return to school. Information on proper handwashing technique is available on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zxIQn7KaCNU>

Children in High Risk Groups

Parents should seek advice from their GP/Consultant if they think their child is in a high-risk group. They must make an informed decision if it is safe for their child to return to school. They should inform the principal of the advice given. If there are any parents who have concerns about their child's health, please contact the school on 059 9161304 or email rathvilly.ns@gmail.com.

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

Return to School Form (**Only after school holidays**)

The COVID-19 control measures in place are consistent with current advice from the HSE, the HPSC, the Health and Safety Authority and the Department of Education and this includes the signing of the Return to School declaration.

Schools have a duty of care to all its students and staff members.

Please complete the School Declaration Form and submit it after each school holiday.

All other school absences require an email sent to class teacher outlining the reasons for the absence.

Covid 19 Symptoms-(taken from the HSE [website 28/08/2021](#))

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
- Fatigue
- Aches and Pains

Other uncommon symptoms of coronavirus include:

- sore throat
- headaches
- runny or stuffy noses
- feeling sick or vomiting
- diarrhoea

Symptoms may be subject to change so regular review of the HSE Website is advised.

Getting an early diagnosis from your GP means you can get the help you need and take steps to avoid spreading the virus, if you have it.

If you are in doubt about any symptoms you have, phone your GP. They will discuss your symptoms with you and advise you on any steps you may need to take.

Staggered Drop Off and Collection Times

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

All the children will enter and leave the building through their designated external doors A-E.

Unfortunately, it will not be possible for parents/guardians to come onto the school grounds before/after school. To minimise the risks, and to help us to maintain social distancing, the children may not come onto the school grounds before the school doors open at 9.10a.m.

Morning:

All class teachers will be in their classrooms by 9.00a.m. Parents are asked to 'drop and go' at their designated time i.e. 9.10a.m. or 9.20a.m.

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

Drop Off Staggered Times

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| 9.10 | Arrival of Senior Infant pupils who enter External door C |
| | Arrival of 3 rd class pupils who enter External door A |
| | Arrival of 2 nd class pupils who enter External door B |
| | Arrival of 6 th class pupils who enter External door E |
| 9.20 | Arrival of Junior Infant pupils who enter External door A |
| | Arrival of 1 st class pupils who enter External door D |
| | Arrival of 5 th class pupils who enter External door B |
| | Arrival of 4 th class pupils who enter External door C |

This is a Stop, Drop, Go system. No adults to enter the school yard. Please do not park in the bus space as this is a drop off zone only.

Children must go straight to their classrooms on arrival.

Pupils on the bus will go straight to their classroom on arrival.

In the afternoon they will remain with their class teacher until the bus arrives at 3.00pm

Summary of drop off and Collection Times

Class	Drop Off	Gate	Door	Gate	Collection
Junior Infants	*9.30am 9.20am	Pedestrian	External Door A	Pedestrian	*12.30pm 2.00pm

*Only for the first two weeks.

Class	Drop Off	Gate	Door	Gate	Collection
Senior Infants	9.10am	Double Gates	External Door C	Double Gates	1.50pm

Class	Drop Off	Gate	Door	Gate	Collection
First Class	9.20am	Double Gates	External Door D	Double Gates	3.00pm

Class	Drop Off	Gate	Door	Gate	Collection
Second Class	9.10am	Pedestrian	External Door B	Pedestrian	2.50pm

Class	Drop Off	Gate	Door	Gate	Collection
Third Class	9.10am	Pedestrian	External Door A	Pedestrian	2.50pm

Class	Drop Off	Gate	Door	Gate	Collection
Fourth Class	9.20am	Double Gates	External Door C	Double Gates	3.00pm

Class	Drop Off	Gate	Door	Gate	Collection
Fifth Class	9.20am	Pedestrian	External Door B	Pedestrian	3.00pm

Class	Drop Off	Gate	Door	Gate	Collection
Sixth Class	9.10am	Double Gates	External Door E	Double Gates	2.50pm

20/08/2021

Junior Infants/Senior Infants

At home time their class teacher will bring them to the school gate. Parents are asked to wait on the socially distanced spots painted on the footpath outside the gates and then leave **promptly** with their child.

Remaining classes:

2.50p.m. Class teachers will bring **2nd, 3rd and 6th Classes** to the school gate. Parents are asked to wait on the socially distanced spots painted on the footpath outside the gates and then leave **promptly** with their child.

3.00p.m. Class teachers will bring **1st, 4th and 5th Classes** to the school gate. Parents are asked to wait on the socially distanced spots painted on the footpath outside the gates and then leave **promptly** with their child.

Supervision will be provided until 3.10p.m.

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

Parents are asked to maintain a social distance outside the school gate. This is to ensure that our pupils and staff are kept safe at all times. Please also wear a mask

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

Collection of Children during the School Day

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

- When the adult arrives at the school, they must phone the office to alert the office that they have arrived. Please remain in your car or at the school gate.
- 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 should enter the school building, unless invited to do so.

Breaktimes

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

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.

Special Education

Special Education will involve withdrawal of pupils from class.

Ms. Murray will work with Junior Infant – 2nd classes.

Mrs Fitzgerald will work with 3rd – 6th classes.

The following is the procedure for SETs withdrawing pupils from class

- Teacher comes to class room door
- Pupil goes to the door and accompanies teacher to Reading room
- Teacher disinfects area after each pupil returns to their class

Junior Infants to Second Class

It is recognised that younger children are unlikely to maintain physical distancing indoors so there is no requirement for children from Junior Infants to Second Class to maintain a physical distance within their Class Bubble. Children in these classes will be arranged in pods and each pod will be spaced at least 1 metre distance from other pods within the classroom.

Third Class to Sixth Class

Children from Third Class to Sixth Class will be seated, as per guidelines, at least 1 metre apart. All unnecessary furniture will be removed from these classrooms to create as much space as possible.

General Purpose (GP) Room

The GP Room may not be used for Assemblies, Physical Education or for any other gatherings of pupils. For the present, it is divided for use as a Learning Support Space and as a classroom for 6th class.

Assemblies

Monthly school Assemblies will be held via Zoom

Additional Measures to Limit Interactions

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

There will be no changing into indoor footwear this year.

Children will hang their coats on the back of their chairs.

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 opened fully in the morning, during breaktimes and after school. They will be partially open during class time.

Cloakrooms and Toilets

Children will only use the toilets in their classrooms.

6th class will use the toilets in the main corridor.

Staff for Junior Infants – 2nd class will use the toilet at the end of the main corridor.

Staff for 3rd – 6th class will use the other staff toilet.

Lunches

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

Every child must be able to eat their lunch independently. Parents are asked to ensure that their children can open and close all items by themselves.

Every lunch box must be washed at home daily.

In line with the school's healthy lunch policy, crisps, biscuits, cakes, minerals (fizzy), sweets, chocolate, chewing gum etc. are not permitted in school.

As we are a 'Green School', children are encouraged to use a lunch box and a re-usable drinks container. We look forward to your co-operation in this matter.

The School Meals Scheme resumes on Monday 31st of August. Pupils will receive 2 food items (a piece of fruit & a healthy a snack bar/biscuit) daily.

Books, Copies, Pencils, etc.

Children should use their own books, pens, pencils, etc. and should not share with other pupils. A box or basket will be provided for each pupil to ensure that they keep their books and stationery separate from others.

Uniforms

There is no guidance or advice to say that school uniforms should be washed every day, and this is probably not practical for most families.

Uniforms 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.

Homework

Assigned homework will be available online on Google Classroom. All homework school books will be dated daily, and homework copies will be collected on Fridays. Each class teacher will outline details on their Google Classroom page. Any queries please contact your child's class teacher.

Instructions on how to upload to Google Classroom can be found on our school website www.rathvillyns.com or alternatively your class teacher will share a video that demonstrates this process

Each child will have their own box or basket in school for books and stationery. All these boxes, baskets, books, copies, pencil cases and stationery will be kept in school and pupils will only need to bring lunch and a drink each day.

Office

Parents must contact the office by phone or email only.

Payments should be sent to school with the child in a sealed envelope stating the child's name and class, the amount enclosed and the reason for the payment.

Communication from School to Parents

Contact will be made via phonecall, email and textparent.

It is vitally important that we have up to date contact information details for all pupils. General information will also be available on the school website.

Physical Education and P.E. Equipment

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

Teaching and Learning

The Department of Education and Skills has published Curriculum guidelines for us, and we ask you to trust our experience and professional expertise as we work with all the children during the return to school.

The Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Updated guidance from the Department states that all Primary teachers and SNAs will be expected to wear face masks (or in certain situations clear visors) if they cannot maintain a 2 metre social distance in school.

Face masks will also be worn in the following situations:

- 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 all staff. Where staff provide healthcare to children with medical needs in the school environment, they will apply standard precautions as per usual.

The children are not required to wear masks or face coverings.

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 dealing with a suspected case of Covid 19.

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

Hygiene and Cleaning

12 extra sanitiser dispensers have been installed throughout the school in each classroom.

Water, soap and paper towels are available in all the classroom toilets, staff bathrooms and staff area.

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

3rd– 6th class pupils may also bring a small bottle of hand sanitiser, if they wish.

Hands will be washed as per current guidelines

- On arrival at school
- Before eating or drinking
- After using the toilet
- After playing outdoors
- When hands are physically dirty
- When they cough or sneeze

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 classrooms. Switches, door/toilet handles, and taps will be cleaned regularly. Staff will 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.

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.

Staff must not attend school if they display any symptoms outlined in this document.

A designated isolation area has been **created outside the office.**

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

- They will be accompanied to the isolation area. A distance of 2 metres will be maintained. If this is not possible, the person accompanying the child must wear PP equipment.
- 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.**
- Staff members who are symptomatic should immediately inform the Principal/Deputy Principal and go to the isolation area.
- A face covering will be provided to the pupil/staff member who is symptomatic.
- The pupil/ staff member who is symptomatic should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects.
- If the pupil/ staff member 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 pupil/ staff member is too unwell to go home or if medical 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 are 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 any child who feels unwell makes that known to the Class Teacher as soon as possible. Staff members who feel unwell should inform the Principal/Deputy Principal as soon as possible.

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/pupils 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.

Important Points

- Teach your child how to wash their hands properly
- Keep your child/ren at home if they are unwell
- Drop and collect your child/ren outside the school as promptly as possible.
- All communication will be conducted via phone/text or email.
- Pupils and staff only on school grounds.
- Please encourage and support your child/ren's education.

