



St Declan's National School,

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Co Waterford

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St Declan's N.S. COVID-19 Response Plan Summary

The Board of Management intends to fully re-open St Declan's N.S. on August 26th and will follow guidance given by the Department of Education, and in line with public health advice as issued by the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) and in compliance with the "Return to Work Safely Protocols" developed by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and the Department of Health with guidance documents provided by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA).

It is the intention of this Covid-19 Response Plan to introduce the supports and control measures for the sustainable reopening of school where the overriding objective is to protect the health of staff and pupils.

What follows is a summary of the procedures we are following in getting back to school. The main control measures to be implemented and described in this document are there to (i) minimise the risk of introduction of infection in our schools; and (ii) managing risk of spread if introduced through:

- Regular and good hand hygiene.
- Good respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette.
- Enhanced cleaning regimes; and
- Maintaining physical distancing in the classroom and within schools.

All measures taken are put in place to allow the school to re-open and help prevent the spread of the virus in the school and out into the local community. The co-operation and support of all the staff of the school, along with parents and pupils is essential in ensuring the safe re-opening of the school.

Reminder to anyone attending school who has travelled abroad:

"Government policy, which is based on official public health advice, continues to advise against non-essential travel overseas for everyone.

It is a requirement for anyone coming into Ireland, to restrict their movements for 14 days, and this includes school staff, parents and children or other students coming from abroad to attend school in Ireland. Restricting your movements means staying indoors in one location and avoiding contact with other people and social situations as much as possible”.

Signage:

Signage outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene, have been posted throughout the school building and at entrance points to the school. The Department has provided printed posters to schools, with age appropriate key health messages – hand washing, sneeze and cough etiquette etc.

Preparing to open the school:

- The school is currently being thoroughly cleaned before re-opening.
- Classrooms have been cleared to make sufficient space for re-configuration of classroom

Floor marking will be set out and signage displayed to help in social distancing and hand-hygiene controls.

- A team including the Principal, Board of Management, Parents’ Association Representatives and Lead Worker Representative and the deputy LWR will carry out a pre-opening Inspection, to ensure that school is in a safe condition for all other staff and pupils to return to and that the provisions identified in the COVID-19 plan have been implemented.

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

- Schools should ensure that they have up-to-date contact numbers for parents/guardians who can be contacted to collect pupils from school in the event of illness. The emergency contact person as confirmed to the school by parents must remain in their car and the child will be brought to them.
- Promote awareness of COVID-19 and its symptoms among staff, parents and pupils as age appropriate for example with posters, email/text communications.
- Advise staff members that have symptoms of COVID-19 or other acute infectious disease not to attend work, to phone their doctor and to follow HSE guidance on self-isolation.
- Advise staff members not to present for work if they have been identified by HSE as a Contact of a person with COVID-19 and to follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement.
- Advise staff members that develop symptoms at work to bring this to the attention of their manager promptly and to follow HSE guidance on self-isolation.
- Request all staff members to confirm on arrival for work each day that they do not have symptoms of COVID-19 infection.
- Advise parents not to bring their children to school if the child has symptoms of a viral respiratory infection or if there is someone in the household suspected or known to have COVID-19 or symptoms related to COVID-19 the children from that home should not attend school.
- Advise parents not to bring their children to school if they have been identified as COVID-19 contacts.
- Ensure students (as appropriate) are aware of the reason why they should not attend if they have respiratory symptoms.
- Ensure students are aware that if they develop signs or symptoms when at school they should let their teacher know.
- It is unlikely to be practical to ask pupils to declare that they are symptom-free on arrival at school; however, parents should be advised that the school reserves the right to decline entry to pupils who appear to have fever or respiratory tract infection.
- Everyone entering the building should be required to perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser.
- Know the Symptoms of COVID-19 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

Respiratory Hygiene:

This requires both staff and pupils to: cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your bent elbow when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately and safely into a nearby bin. By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and Covid-19.

The Minister also confirmed that she had been working with the public health authorities to ensure that the public health advice underpinning the safe reopening of schools is fully up to date. Public Health Authorities have confirmed that the recommendations initially issued in July remain current, with the exception of changes to guidance on the wearing of face coverings in a school context. These recommendations from the HSE's Health Protection Surveillance Centre confirm that:

- All recommendations published in the public health advice by the Minister at the beginning of July including physical distancing guidelines as set out in the recently published roadmap still apply in all schools, with the exception of the recommendations on face coverings which has been updated to reflect the latest research and expertise.
- Staff, including teachers at both primary and post primary levels, who cannot maintain a 2m distance from students or other staff will be required to wear face coverings. A visor will suffice if that distance can be maintained, e.g. in teaching a lesson.
- All SNAs will be required to wear face coverings, or in certain situations clear visors, in the classroom.
- All visiting staff who have close contact with students will be required to wear face coverings.

Hand Hygiene:

Staff and pupils should understand why hand hygiene is important as well as when and how to wash their hands. The school will promote good hygiene and display posters throughout the schools on how to wash your hands. We will follow the HSE guidelines on hand washing.

Changes of the school building layout:

Physical Distancing

The re-configuration of classrooms and other areas has been completed and was deemed necessary to support physical distancing in line with the guidance in advance of school reopening.

Although there have been changes in the classrooms of Junior to second class to facilitate social distancing, it is not mandatory for this age group.

Pupils from 3rd – 6th class are organized in pods that are 1m apart. The seating has been arranged so that children's seats are 1 meter apart.

Each classroom is to structure pupils and their teachers into Class Bubbles (i.e. a class grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible). The children in the split fifth class will be part of two class bubbles.

Generally speaking, the objective is to limit contact and sharing of common facilities between people in different Class Bubbles (and Pods within those Class Bubbles) 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 departure at the end of the school day. The Pods within those Class Bubbles is an additional measure, to limit the extent of close contact within the Class Bubble.

To the greatest extent possible, pupils and teaching staff should consistently be in the same Class Bubbles, with Staff members who move from class bubble to class bubble to be limited as much as possible.

Ber's office, at the top of the corridor beside the teachers' bathroom, is to be the designated isolation area and will be clearly signed as such. Lindsey's SEN room/office adjacent to Ber's room will be a second isolation area, should this be needed.

Special Educational Needs:

Additional considerations are needed for those children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) as maintaining physical distancing in many instances will not be practical or appropriate to implement. The focus should therefore, be on emphasising that parents/guardians should have a heightened awareness of signs, symptoms or changes in baseline which suggests illness/COVID-19

Similarly, staff should be aware of their responsibility not to attend for work if they develop signs or symptoms of respiratory illness.

The use of a face covering will conceal facial expression and can make communication difficult and as such may not be practical in this setting; however, the wearing of a visor as an alternative to a facial covering may be considered where there is a concern that physical distancing cannot be maintained, there will be prolonged close contact and/or that exposure to fluid/respiratory droplets is likely.

Uniforms:

Leo Varadkar announced on July 23rd that children would be wearing uniforms on their return to school and that according to health advice provided by the HSPC, there is no health issue regarding the wearing of school uniforms. "No issues from a public health perspective have been raised regarding children wearing school uniforms, so the normal policy for each school in respect of wearing uniforms will remain a matter for each school and each board of management." Our Board has decided that uniforms will be worn but that if parents wish to wash the uniforms during the school week that a plain navy tracksuit (PE day tracksuit) may be worn. All items of clothing must be clearly labeled to avoid misplacing them

Arriving at school:

Children will go directly to their classrooms upon arrival at the school through their designated entry points.

Children may not be dropped at school before 9.10 a.m. and must be collected promptly at home times.

Junior and Seniors Infants use the back door

First and second class use the front door

Third use the emergency door to the rear of the school at the College Road end of the building

Fourth and Fifth (Ms O Mahony) use the emergency door at the front of the school

Fifth and Sixth (Ms Keevers) use the emergency door into the classroom

For health and Safety reasons admission to the School for anyone other than pupils and staff is by appointment only. In the event of emergencies please ring the school secretary.

In the event that a child has an appointment outside school, parents may use the intercom system when collecting children. Parents are asked not to return the child to school that day.

Access points/ break times

At break and lunch times, the children are to utilise the five access points as described above to decrease interaction between class bubbles.

Break times have also been staggered to decrease numbers entering and leaving the building at these times

Senior Students breaks will be from 11 to 11.10 and from 12.45 to 1.15

Junior Students breaks will be from 11.15 to 11.25 and from 1.05 to 1.35

Break times:

Fifth and sixth will have opposite sides of the Astro turf on Monday,

Wednesday and Friday and the back yard (sixth) and front lawn (fifth) on

Tuesdays and Thursday

Third and Fourth will have opposite sides of the Astro turf on Tuesdays

and Thursdays and the back yard(Fourth) and front lawn (third) on

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

First and Second will have the opposite sides of the Astro turf on Monday,

Wednesday and Friday and the back yard (Second) and front lawn(first)

on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Junior and Senior Infants opposite sides of the Astro turf on Tuesdays and Thursdays and the back yard (Juniors) and front lawn (Seniors) on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

If the front lawn is wet, children will play on the foot paths to the front of the school building.

End of School Day

Teachers will accompany children to the designated exit points and each teacher will oversee that students enter the parent car park or leave the school premises.

Emergencies:

In emergency situations and during fire drills classes will leave the building via their designated entry and exit points, that have been established as part of our Covid Response Plan. Teachers and children in the New building will exit onto the back yard, if there are people in Natalie's, or/and Lindsey's rooms they will exit by the emergency door at the College Road end of the school.

Hand Hygiene:

Staff will promote good hygiene and there are posters displayed throughout the schools on how to wash your hands.

Paper towels will be used by pupils to turn off taps after cleaning to avoid re-contamination if turning taps off with bare hands. Signs to indicate this requirement will be posted at all sinks, throughout the school.

Hand sanitiser is suitable for use for hand hygiene when hands are not visibly soiled (look clean).

Young children should not have independent use of containers of alcohol gel.

Frequency of Hand Hygiene:

Pupils and staff should perform hand hygiene:

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

Cleaning regimes:

Schools have been provided a Covid-19 specific capitation payment which will be used as the mechanism to support the implementation of enhanced cleaning regimes in schools.

Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19:

Staff or pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of COVID-19. The following outlines how St Declan's N.S. will deal with a suspected case that may arise in a school setting:

- A designated isolation area has been identified within the school building.
- The designated isolation area is behind a closed door and away from other staff and pupils.
- If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school the following are the procedures to be implemented:
 - If the person with the suspected case is a pupil, the parents/guardians will be contacted immediately.
 - The suspected case will be isolated accompanied to the designated isolation area keeping at least 2m away from the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2m from the symptomatic person at all times.
 - If it is not possible to maintain a distance of 2m a staff member caring for a pupil should wear a face covering or mask.
 - Provide a mask for the person presenting with symptoms. He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the

premises.

- Assess whether the individual who is displaying symptoms can immediately be directed to go home/be brought home by parents who will call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home.
- Facilitate the person presenting with symptoms remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and facilitate them calling their doctor.

- The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. Advice should be given to the person presenting with symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bag provided.
- If the person is well enough to go home, arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible and advise them to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms.
- School bus to transport the individual who is displaying symptoms home should not be used.
- If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a Covid-19 suspect.
- The school Principal, LWR will carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery.
- Children, who shared a classroom with the child with suspected Covid 19 will be removed from the classroom, to enable cleaning of surfaces in this room.

Access to School and Contact Log:

Access to the school and school grounds is to be restricted to essential purposes and limited to those who have obtained prior approval from the Principal.

As the prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a crucial step in restricting the spread of the virus and protecting the health and safety of the individuals themselves and other staff, contractors and visitors at the workplace, a detailed sign in/sign out log of those entering the school facilities will be maintained.

Emergency contacts:

The school will request that parent/guardians of pupils re-submit contact details of those they wish to be used, should their child need to be sent home and if they themselves are unavailable to collect their child.

Communication:

There will be direct communication to parents via text.

Pupils must not be routinely used by teachers to send messages to teachers throughout the school. An electronic messaging system via smart phones will be used to relay school information between staff.

Parents will be informed that they cannot enter the school to discuss matters relating to their children but must telephone the school and make arrangements for the class teacher to contact them over the telephone at an appropriate time.

Personal property:

Each child will be given a basket, by school staff, in which they will place their personal

belongings.

Please ensure all belongings including lunch boxes and water bottles are labeled clearly.

Children may need to bring two water bottles as they will not be able to refill their bottles in the staff room this year. Children will also need to have their own utensils etc for this same reason.

Homework

We will not be giving homework for the month of September.

Children are asked to have a separate pencil case at home and to have a separate clearly labeled pencil case in school.

This is a working document that is subject to change,

Parents will be kept up to date on an ongoing basis.

This Response Plan Document was ratified at a meeting on August 24th 2020.

Signed [Signature] Chairperson Date 24 AUG 2020

Signed [Signature] Principal Date 24-8/20