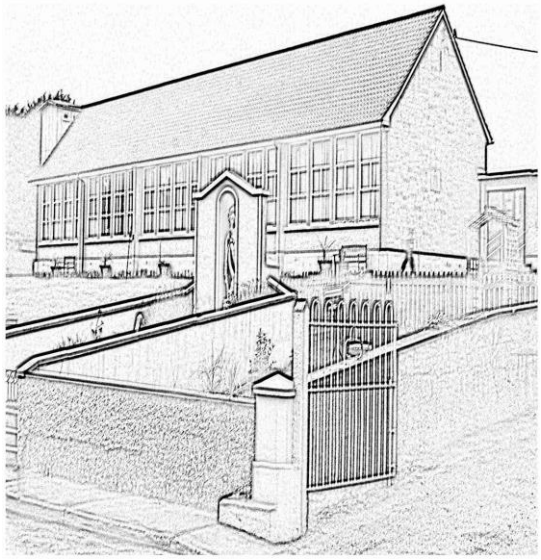
Drinagh N. S.

Covid-19 Response Plan



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This is a living document and may be reviewed and amended to take into account new guidance from www.Gov.ie, www.dbei.ie , www.hse.ie, www.hpsc.ie, www.hsa.ie; www.education.ie or agreements with education partners as appropriate for primary and special schools.

Introduction

The Minister for Education has published "*The Roadmap for the Full Return to School*" on the 27th July. It sets out what the operation of schools will look like and the range of supports which will be available in a COVID-19 context.

It has been developed in line with public health advice 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). Each workplace is required to have a COVID-19 Response Plan. In addition to being places of learning, schools are also places of work. The purpose of this document is to provide clear and helpful guidance for the safe operation through the prevention, early detection and control of COVID-19 in our school. It provides key messages to minimise the risk of COVID-19 for staff, pupils, families and the wider community while recognising the importance of education for the health and wellbeing of pupils and society as a whole.

This document focuses on the practical steps which can be taken in our school to minimise the risk of the introduction of infection into the school and the spread of infection if it does while recognising that no interpersonal activity is without risk of transmission of infection at any time.

One of the key challenges is to balance the need for a practical and sensible level of caution with the need to provide a supportive environment for teaching and learning.

This response plan supports the sustainable reopening of our school where the overriding objective is to protect the health of staff and pupils while promoting the educational and development needs of the pupils in the school.

It is critical that staff, pupils, parents and visitors are aware of and adhere to the control measures outlined and that they fully cooperate with all the procedures and health and safety requirements. Any instances of non-compliance will be brought to the attention of the Board of Management.

COVID-19 Policy Statement

Drinagh National School is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our staff and a safe learning environment for all our pupils. To ensure that, we have developed the following COVID-19 Response Plan. The BOM and all school staff are responsible for the implementation of this plan and a combined effort will help contain the spread of the virus. We will:

- continue to monitor our COVID-19 response and amend this plan in consultation with our staff
- provide up to date information to our staff and pupils on the Public Health advice issued by the HSE and Gov.ie
- display information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and correct hand-washing techniques
- agree with staff, a worker representative who is easily identifiable to carry out the role outlined in this plan
- inform all staff and pupils of essential hygiene and respiratory etiquette and physical distancing requirements
- adapt the school to facilitate physical distancing as appropriate in line with the guidance and direction of the Department of Education
- keep a contact log to help with contact tracing
- ensure staff engage with the induction / familiarisation briefing provided by the Department of Education
- implement the agreed procedures to be followed in the event of someone showing symptoms of COVID-19 while at school
- provide instructions for staff and pupils to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during school time
- implement cleaning in line with Department of Education advice

All school staff will be consulted on an ongoing basis and feedback is encouraged on any concerns, issues or suggestions.
This can be done through the Lead Worker Representative(s), who will be supported in line with the agreement between the Department and education partners.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

This document should be read in conjunction with:

- the COVID-19 Return to Work Safely Protocol;
- the Guidance and FAQs for Public Service Employers during COVID-19;
- COVID-19 Response Plan

Planning and Preparing for Return to School

The BOM aims to facilitate the resumption of school based teaching and learning and the return to the workplace of staff. The return to the workplace must be done safely and in strict adherence to the public health advice and any guidance issued by the Department of Education.

Details for the safe reopening of the school facility and the applicable controls are outlined in this document.

Induction Training

All staff will undertake and complete Covid-19 Induction Training prior to returning to the school building. The aim of such training is to ensure that staff have full knowledge and understanding of the following:

- Latest up to-date advice and guidance on public health;
- Covid-19 symptoms;
- What to do if a staff member or pupil develops symptoms of Covid-19 while at school;
- Outline of the Covid-19 response plan.

Staff will be kept fully informed of the control measures in place in the school and their duties and responsibilities in preventing the spread of Covid-19 and will be updated with any changes to the control measures or guidance available from the public health authorities.

Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)

Return to Work Form

In order to return to the workplace, staff must complete a **Return to Work (RTW)** form, which is available online or from the principal.

A RTW form should be completed and returned **3 days** before returning to work.

There are some school staff who may be unable to return to school. Current public health guidelines have identified these people as being in groups who are defined as being at **very high risk.** This will be updated in line with public health advice.

Induction Training

All staff will undertake and complete Covid-19 Induction training prior to returning to school. This training will ensure that staff have full knowledge and understanding of the following:

- Latest up to date advice and guidance on public health
- Covid-19 symptoms
- What to do if a staff member or pupil develops symptoms of Covid-19 while at school
- Outline of Covid -19 response plan

Staff will be kept fully informed of the control measures in place in the school and their duties and responsibilities in preventing the spread of Covid-19 and with any changes to the control measures or guidance available from the public health authorities.

People at very high risk (extremely vulnerable):

The list of people in very high risk groups include people who:

- are over 70 years of age - even if fit and well
- have had an organ transplant
- are undergoing active chemotherapy for cancer
- are having radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
- have cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
- are having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
- are having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
- have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
- have severe respiratory conditions including cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, pulmonary fibrosis, lung fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and severe COPD
- have a condition that means they have a very high risk of getting infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell)
- are taking medicine that makes you much more likely to get infections (such as high doses of steroids or immunosuppression therapies)
- have a serious heart condition and are pregnant

The advice for this group is available from the HSE. Details of the arrangements that will apply for these staff, which will be in accordance with those applying for the public service generally, will be updated by the Department of Education following consultation with management bodies and unions and a circular will issue to all schools.

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.

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 principal/BOM.

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

One of the key messages to manage the risks of COVID-19 is to do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into the school. If infection is not introduced it cannot be spread. The risk of spreading the infection once introduced exists in all interpersonal interactions; student-student, teacher-teacher and teacher-student and must be managed in all settings.

A range of essential control measures have been implemented to reduce the risk of the spread of Covid-19 virus and to protect the safety, health and welfare of staff, pupils, parents and visitors as far as possible within the school. The control measures shall continue to be reviewed and updated as required on an ongoing basis.

It is critical that staff, pupils, parents and visitors are aware of, and adhere to, the control measures outlined and that they fully cooperate with all health and safety requirements.

Staff should note that they have a legal obligation under Section 13 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 to comply with health and safety requirements and to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves, their colleagues and other parties within the workplace.

How to Minimise the Risk of Introduction of COVID-19 into Schools:

- Promote awareness of COVID-19 symptoms;
- Advise staff and pupils that have symptoms not to attend school, to phone their doctor and to follow HSE guidance on self-isolation;
- Advise staff and pupils not to attend school if they have been identified by the HSE as a contact for person with COVID-19 and to follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement;
- Pupils/staff who have travelled from countries not on the green list must not attend school during the 14 day self-isolation period after entering Ireland.
- Advise staff and pupils that develop symptoms at school to bring this to the attention of the Principal promptly;
- Ensure that staff and pupils know the protocol for managing a suspected case of COVID-19 in school***;***
- Everyone entering the school building needs to perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser and wear a mask;
- Visitors to the school during the day should be by prior arrangement and should be received at a specific contact point;
- Physical distancing (of 2m) should be maintained between staff and visitors where possible.

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

Staff or pupils displaying any of these symptoms must not attend school.

Respiratory Hygiene

All members of our school community must practise and promote good respiratory hygiene at home and at school as this will protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and Covid-19.

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your bent elbow when you cough or sneeze.
- Dispose of the used tissue immediately and safely into a nearby bin.
- Bins will be emptied daily.

Hand Hygiene

All members of our school community must practise and promote good hand hygiene at home and at school.

- Staff and pupils should understand why hand hygiene is important as well as when and how to wash their hands.
- Hand hygiene can be achieved by hand washing or use of a hand sanitiser (when hands look clean).
- Hand washing facilities will be maintained in good condition and supplies of soap and paper towels will be topped up regularly to encourage everyone to use them.
- Posters displaying hand washing techniques and promoting hand washing are displayed at every hand washing station.
- Hand sanitiser is suitable for use for hand hygiene when hands are not visibly soiled (look clean).
- Hand sanitiser are installed at each entry point, in each classroom and at appropriate locations throughout the school.
- Evidence of effectiveness is best for alcohol based hand rubs but non-alcohol based hand rubs can be used too.
- 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.

Physical Distancing

Maintaining physical distancing in the school environment is one of the key control measures to minimize the risk of the introduction and spread of COVID-19.

Physical distancing will be usefully applied in our school allowing for flexibility when needed. It must be applied in a practical way to recognise that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on this issue.

Physical distancing falls into two categories:

- Increasing separation
- Decreasing interaction

Increasing separation

It is not practical or age appropriate for pupils from junior infants to second class to maintain social distancing.

Pupils from third class to sixth class will be positioned into pods with a maximum of six children per pod. These pods will be a minimum of one metre apart.

It is also recognised that it will not always be possible for staff to maintain physical distance from pupils and it is not appropriate that they would be expected to do so where this could have a detrimental impact on the pupil i.e. if a child sustains an injury and requires first aid or if a child is anxious and needs support.

However, where possible, staff should maintain a minimum of 1m distance and where possible 2m. They should also take measures to avoid close contact at face to face level such as remaining standing rather than sitting beside/crouching down.

Staff will wear suitable face coverings while at work. Visors will be worn at the top of the class when explicit teaching is taking place and masks while moving around the classroom or in close contact to a child.

A distance of 2m is recommended for physical distancing by staff. This is particularly relevant to distancing between adults when they are not engaged in teaching such as the staff room and arriving to work.

All adult visitors to the school, as scheduled by appointment, must maintain a 2 metre distance from school staff and wear a face mask.

Decreasing interaction

We hope to reduce the risk of infection by structuring our pupils and their teachers into Class Bubbles (i.e. a class grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible) and discrete groups or "Pods" within those class bubbles, to the extent that this is practical.

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, rather than to avoid all contact between Pods, as the latter will not always be possible.

The aim of the system within the school is that class grouping 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 although this will not be possible at all times.

Each bubble is assigned a toilet time. Children will have to wash their hands and use the toilets at these times only.

In the event that a child needs to use the toilet outside of these allocated times, they may use the toilet with the blue door at the end of the hallway.

Sharing educational material between Pods will be avoided/ minimised where possible.

Outdoor Play

Each class will have a separate area in the school yard. Classes will not mix at any point during the school day.

It is not possible to maintain physical distancing when pupils in primary schools play together outdoors, but in so far as practical it is helpful to keep to consistent groups. Therefore children from the same class bubble only are allowed to play together. We will use our tarmac and grass area as separate play areas.

The risk of transmission from contact with outside surfaces or play areas is low

School drop off/collection

In the morning please drop your child at the gate and only wait for as long as you are sure they have entered the school. Children may only be dropped after 9:10am.

Your child needs to make their way to the shelter at the back of the school. Each class has been assigned their own separate area in the shelter.

At home time the teacher will walk the children to the front of the school and each class will leave through a separate exit. We ask that you stay in your car until your child's class come out to their line. If you are walking please maintain social distancing at all times. Please move on promptly once your child has been collected.

Hygiene and Cleaning in Schools

- In accordance with department guidelines the school will be thoroughly cleaned every day.
- Cleaning will be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, hand rails, 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.
- The table and chairs in the SETs rooms will be cleaned by the SET between the different pupils attending.
- Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.
- Books, toys and learning resources will be cleaned regularly or quarantined for 72 hours.
- All PE equipment must be sanitised or quarantined for 72 hours after use.
- Ipads must be cleaned after use.
- Any staff member to use the phone will clean it after use. Hands must be sanitised before and after using the photocopier.
- Sanitiser dispensers have been installed in every classroom, at the entrance, by the photocopier, in the staff room and the office.
- There are soap dispensers in all toilets.
- Hand hygiene will be explicitly taught and promoted.

Cleaning/Disinfecting rooms where a pupil/staff member with suspected COVID-19 was present

- The room should be cleaned as soon as practicably possible.
- Once the room is vacated the room should not be reused until the room has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry.
- Clean the environment and furniture using disposable cleaning cloths and a household detergent followed by disinfection with a chlorine based product (household bleach).
- Pay special attention to frequently touched surfaces, the back of chairs, couches, door handles and any surfaces that are visibly soiled with body fluids.
- Once the room has been cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry, the room can be reused.

Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19

Staff or pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of COVID-19.

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 should be contacted immediately. Parents must make sure that their contact details are up to date at all times. If we are unable to contact a parent/guardian it will be considered a serious breach of Health and Safety. Therefore please ensure your contact details are up to date.

- Staff member/parent of symptomatic child is advised to inform their GP by phone of their symptoms.

- Staff members who are symptomatic should immediately inform the principal and leave the school if well enough otherwise go to the isolation area.

- Pupil will be supervised in an isolated area. A distance of 2 metres will be maintained;

- If the child/staff member is 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 isolation area, work area and toilets 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.

Wellbeing of the School Community

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

Promoting well-being in children

Continuum of Support-tiered model

The Stay Safe programme will be taught at the start of the school year.
There will be an increased emphasis on the teaching of SPHE, PE and outdoor activities.

Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

The Department recognises the need for school staff wellbeing and collective self-care. 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'*.

However it is a working document and is subject to change as the need arises or public health advice changes

Signed:

Pat-joe Cronin

Mr. Pat-Joe Cronin Chairperson of BOM Date 24/08/2020