



Maynooth Educate Together National School

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MAYNOOTH EDUCATE TOGETHER NATIONAL SCHOOL

SCHOOL RESPONSE PLAN

COVID-19

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Maynooth Educate Together NS

School COVID-19 Response Plan

Introduction

Maynooth Educate Together National School is a mixed school with 303 students. We have 11 mainstream classes and two ASD classes. In our school we have 31 staff members, comprising of the Principal, 19 teachers, 9 SNA's, a caretaker and school secretary.

This *COVID-19 Response Plan* is designed to support the staff and Board of Management (BOM)/Education Training Board (ETB) in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Maynooth Educate Together NS.

The COVID-19 Response Plan details the policies and practices necessary for a school to meet the Government's '*Return to Work Safely Protocol*', the Department of Education and Skills Plan for School Re-opening and to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the school environment. The plan incorporates current advice about measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the community issued by the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE).

It is important that any proposals and recommendations in relation to the resumption of school based teaching and learning and the reopening of school facilities comply with the protocol and to minimise the risk to students, staff and others. As the advice issued by NPHE continues to evolve, this protocol and the measures management and staff need to address may also change.

The response plan will support 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 children in the school.

In line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol, the key to a safe and continued return to work, and re-opening of our schools requires strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between the Board of management, staff, pupils and parents.

This document aims to provide details of:

- **COVID-19 School Policy**
- **Planning and Preparing for Return to School**
- **Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representative(s)**
- **Safety Statement and Risk Assessment**
- **General advice to prevent the spread of the virus**
- **Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)**
- **Control Measures**

- **Dealing with a suspected case of COVID-19**
- **Staff Duties**
- **COVID related absence management**
- **Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme**
- **Pupil Return to School**

The assistance and cooperation of all staff, pupils, parents/guardians, contractors and visitors is critical to the success of the plan.

Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information provided in this document. However, should errors or omissions be identified, please notify us so that appropriate measures can be taken to rectify same.

Note: The plan is a live working 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;

Maynooth Educate Together NS COVID-19 Policy

This COVID-19 policy outlines our commitment as a school to implement the plan and help prevent the spread of the virus. The policy will be signed and dated by the Principal and Chairperson of the Board of Management and brought to the attention of staff, pupils, parents and others.

Planning and Preparing for Return to School

The Board of Management aims to facilitate the resumption of school-based teaching and learning and the return to the workplace of staff. The return to the work must be done safely and in strict adherence to the advice and instructions of public health authorities and the Government.

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

Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)

In order to return to the workplace, staff must complete a **Return to Work (RTW)** form, which is available electronically or from the Principal. A hard copy is attached also at **Appendix 1**.

The RTW form should only be completed **at least 3 days** prior to any proposed date of return to the workplace. Staff will be required to complete a RTW form at least 3 days prior to any return to the school facility (see section 2 above). The purpose of the RTW form is to get confirmation from staff that, to the best of his/her knowledge, he/she has no symptoms of COVID-19 and is not self-isolating or cocooning or awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test.

On receipt of the completed form the Principal will provide: details of the Induction Training for completion by staff prior to the return to the workplace and details of any additional health and safety measures in place in the school to facilitate the staff member's return to the school facility.

Staff at very high risk or at high risk

Current public health guidelines have identified groups who are defined as being at very high risk, or at high risk.

The advice for this group is available from the HSE. Staff who are in these group should self-declare on the Return to Work form if they believe that they are at very high risk or at high risk. Details of the leave arrangements that will apply will be updated by the Department of Education and Skills.

Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representative

Responsibility for the development and implementation of the COVID-19 Response Plan and the associated control measures lies primarily with the Board of Management and the School Leadership.

The Return to Work Safely protocol provides for an agreed procedure between management and staff to appoint a Lead Worker Representative to carry out a specific role.

However, all staff, parents/guardians, contractors and visitors have a responsibility both as individuals and collectively to have due regard for their own health and safety and that of others and to assist with the implementation of the COVID-19 Response Plan and associated control measures.

Name(s):	Contact Details
Aimee Egan: Lead Worker Representative Joan Eley: Deputy LWR Robert Potter: Assistant LWR	aegan@maynoothet.ie jeley@maynoothet.ie rpottter@maynoothet.ie

The role of the worker representative) is to ensure that COVID-19 measures are adhered to in the workplace as follows:

- Work collaboratively with the employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19.
- Promote good hygiene practices such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette along with maintaining social distancing in accordance with public health advice.
- Assist with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace.
- Monitor adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.
- Make representations on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.
- If a staff member has any concerns or observations in relation to the COVID-19 Response Plan and control measures or the adherence to such control measures by staff, parents/guardians, contractors or visitors, he/she should contact the lead worker(s) who will engage with the Principal/BOM.

Safety Statement and Risk Assessment

The Department of Education and Skills are engaging with the HSA in order to provide schools with guidance on updating their Risk Assessments and Safety Statements.

Risk Assessments and Checklists

The Department of Education and Skills have issued Risk assessments and checklists specific to COVID-19. We have been guided by these in assessing what measures need to be put in place to ensure the safeguarding of staff members, children, parents / guardians and visitors.

Risk Assessment: Actions:

- Follow public health guidance from HSE re hygiene and respiratory etiquette
- School signage and posters; age-appropriate key health messages, in place
- Complete School COVID-19 Policy statement
- Return-to-work forms received and reviewed
- Induction Training provided and engaged with
- Contact log in place
- Checking the school building and grounds: health and safety risk assessment
- Social distancing compliance
- Dealing with a confirmed case of COVID-19
- Risk assessment of staff members with underlying medical conditions
- Risk assessment for control of waste
- Identification of Lead Worker Representative

Checklists will include:

COVID-19 Return to Work Questionnaire - to be completed by all staff members at least 3 days prior to their return to work.

Staff Checklist...

General advice to prevent the spread of the virus

Staff and visitors should at all times adhere to the up to date advice and instructions of the public health authorities in relation to protecting oneself and others against the risk posed by the COVID-19 virus.

Updated advice from the HSE is available on its website; <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>

The Department of Education and Skills will ensure all updated advice is circulated to schools. Maynooth Educate Together NS will arrange for this advice to be circulated to staff, pupils and visitors in a timely manner.

Symptoms of COVID-19

The most common respiratory symptoms of COVID-19 infection include; a high temperature, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties.

Any staff member displaying these symptoms should immediately inform the Principal teacher. They will not be permitted to attend work if they have any of the symptoms listed below:

- High temperature
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- Loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste

Staff must inform the Principal of this situation as soon as possible.

Control Measures

The following advice is provided to inform school staff and pupils **how to reduce the chance of getting infected by the coronavirus**:

- *Wash your hands frequently*
- *Maintain social distancing*
- *Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth*

Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

It is crucial that all staff, pupils, parents/guardians, contractors and visitors are familiar with, and adopt, good hand and respiratory hygiene practices.

Signage and Posters: Guidance documentation and Information posters will be available at various locations within the school facility. Information posters will be prominently displayed at appropriate locations within the school facility including offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilet areas. Such are intended to inform but also remind everyone about the importance of hygiene in preventing the spread of COVID-19 virus and protecting health and safety.

Handwashing and hand sanitisers: Handwashing facilities and/or hand sanitisers are available at multiple locations within the school facility. They are set up at all entrances/exits, on corridors, in each classroom, in the staffroom and in all common areas in the school.

By following good respiratory hygiene, we protect the people around from viruses such as cold, flu and COVID-19.

Good hygiene practices and washing your hands properly and regularly can help stop the spread of the virus. It is, therefore, crucial that all staff adhere to this advice and adopt the following practices as strictly as possible.

Do

- Wash your hands properly and often
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough and sneeze
- Put used tissues into a bin and wash your hands
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Do Not

- Touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean
- Share objects that touch your mouth – for example, bottles, cups, cutlery, etc.

You Should Wash Your Hands:

- After coughing or sneezing
- Before and after eating
- Before and after preparing food
- If you were in contact with someone who has a fever or respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing)
- Before and after being on public transport
- Before and after being in a crowd (especially an indoor crowd)
- When you arrive and leave buildings
- If your hands are dirty
- After toilet use

For advice from HSE on how to wash your hands the following link will be helpful:

<https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html>

Coughing Etiquette

- Cover your mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze
- Or, cover your mouth and nose using your upper sleeve/elbow
- Dispose of the used tissue in the bins provided
- Wash your hands following the handwashing procedure

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 with any changes to the control measures or guidance available from the public health authorities.

If a staff member is unsure about any aspect of the COVID-19 Response Plan, the associated control measures, or his/her duties, he/she should immediately seek guidance from the Principal.

Cleaning

Arrangements for more regular and thorough cleaning of areas and surfaces within the school will be made. The school has employed a contract cleaning company who will clean the school thoroughly each afternoon, after school dismissal. In addition, our school caretaker will be on-site throughout the school day to perform incidental cleaning of communal areas.

Regular and thorough cleaning of communal areas and frequently touched surfaces shall be conducted, in particular, toilets, lifts, door handles and kitchens. Cleaning will be performed regularly and whenever facilities or surfaces are visibly dirty.

All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area. Supplies such as paper towels, hand sanitizer, hand soap, disinfectant/detergent sprays and latex gloves will be available in every classroom. Under no circumstances should these cleaning materials be removed from the building. Children are not to be asked to clean their classrooms and must not handle cleaning supplies.

Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day.

There will be regular collection of used waste disposal bags from offices and other areas within the school facility.

Shower facilities shall not be available for use by staff or pupils due to the increased risk associated with communal shower facilities and areas. This shall be reviewed in line with government guidance.

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

Access to the school building / contact log

Access to the school facility will be in line with agreed school procedures.

Arrangement for necessary visitors such as contractors and parents/guardians will be restricted to essential purposes and limited to those who have obtained prior approval from the Principal.

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 should be maintained. The school should maintain a log of staff and students contacts. In addition see visitor contact log at Appendix 2.

Administration Office

The administration area is not available to the school staff.

- Staff wishing to speak to the school secretary may use the internal phone system or alternatively speak to the secretary through the protective Perspex window.
- Keyboards, touch-screens, printers and telephones must be wiped down with anti-bacterial sprays/wipes before and after each use.
- Photocopiers are located on the school corridors for staff use only.

Staffroom

The staffroom is available for use by teachers. Its' capacity is limited to 9, and all seating is 2 metres apart. Cutlery and delph have been removed and staff will provide their own utensils.

Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

In accordance with most recent advice from the DES on August 7th, it is recommended that all staff wear face coverings if unable to maintain a 2-metre distance from colleagues in school. If possible, staff should wear face coverings if unable to maintain 2m physical distance from pupils. With younger pupils and/or pupils with special educational needs, this may not be possible.

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.

Such include roles where:

- Performing intimate care
- Where a suspected case of COVID 19 is identified while the school is in operation

Appropriate PPE will be available for all staff.

Equipment will include:

- Disposable face masks/or re-usable masks that may be washed at home
- Disposable gloves
- Disposable aprons and gowns
- Visors
- Disinfectant/Detergent sprays
- Paper towels
- Shoe coverings
- Hair nets

Joan, Deputy LWR, will conduct regular stocktakes of all PPE, and will re-order when necessary, to ensure that there are adequate supplies of PPE available at all times.

While PPE may provide additional protection from COvic-19, it is important to be aware that it does not remove the need to observe physical distance (in so far as is possible with children), regularly wash your hands, and refrain from touching your face and eyes, even when wearing gloves.

First Aid/Emergency Procedure

The standard First Aid/Emergency procedure shall continue to apply in Maynooth Educate Together NS.

In an emergency or in case of a serious incident:

- *Call for an ambulance or the fire brigade on 112/999*
- *Contact the principal giving details of location and type of medical incident.*

Designated Isolation Room

An isolation room has been assigned for use if there is a suspected case of COVID-19 in the school. The room/area is located at the back of hall area and has double-doors leading to a yard area. This isolation area will be used to separate a suspected case of COVID-19 from other staff members and children until they leave the premises.

The isolation area is:

- Easily accessible and is accessible to staff and pupils with disabilities
- May be well ventilated and away from other staff and children
- Will not be used for any other purpose
- Will contain a box of supplies ie Tissues, masks, hand-sanitizer, disinfectant, wipes, PPE such as aprons, gowns, gloves, masks, thermometer, shoe covers, hair nets, clinical waste bags, bin,
- Paper/ colours/ wipeable books in the event a child has to wait in the area
- Ipad or tablet, with pre-recorded age-appropriate films / programmes / cartoons

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 Maynooth Educate Together NS will deal with a suspected case that may arise during the course of work.

A designated isolation area should be identified within the school building. The possibility of having more than one person displaying signs of COVID-19 should be considered and a contingency plan for dealing with additional cases put in place. The designated isolation area should be behind a closed door and away from other staff and pupils.

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at work in Maynooth Educate Together NS, 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
- Isolate the person and have a procedure in place to accompany the individual to the designated isolation area via the isolation route, keeping at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic person at all times
- Provide a mask for the person presenting with symptoms if one is available. 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 and 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. Public transport of any kind 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.
- Carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery
- Arrange for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.

The HSE will inform any staff/parents who have come into close contact with a diagnosed case via the contact tracing process. The HSE will contact all relevant persons where a diagnosis of COVID-19 is made. The instructions of the HSE should be followed and staff confidentiality is essential at all times.

Confirmed Case of COVID-19

If a child or staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19, the HSE contact tracing process will be activated. Contact tracing identifies people who were in close contact with someone who has coronavirus. A 'close' contact is deemed to mean someone who has spent more than fifteen minutes of face-to-face contact within 2 metres of an infected person in any setting.

Schools are required to keep a list of visitors to schools for contact tracing. Staff will be encouraged to download the COVID Tracker app to assist in the identification of close contacts.

If you have had such contact with a confirmed case, the HSE contact tracing team will contact you through a call from a contact tracer, or an alert through the COVID-19 tracker app. They will arrange a test for you and advise you to restrict your movements for 14 days. If you are advised to restrict your movements, you should not attend work, and will be on COVID-19 Restricted Movements leave, as per Circular 0049/20.

The Chief Medical Officer has advised school Principals that "Public Health Authorities will contact schools if there is any action to be taken in relation to your school and students. You should not take unilateral action. Schools should remain open unless there is clear public health advice that they should close.

Staff Duties

Staff have a statutory obligation to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of their colleagues and other parties. In order to facilitate a safe return to work, these duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Adhere to the School COVID-19 Response Plan and the control measures outlined. The cooperation and assistance of all staff is essential to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 and to protect health and safety as far as possible within the school. All staff have a key role to play
- Coordinate and work with their colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained
- Make themselves aware of the symptoms of COVID-19 and monitor their own wellbeing
- Self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any symptoms of COVID-19
- Not return or attend school if they have symptoms of COVID-19 under any circumstances.
- If they develop any symptoms of COVID-19 whilst within the school facility, they should adhere to the procedure outlined above

- Complete the RTW (Return To Work) form before they return to work
- Must inform the Principal if there are any other circumstances relating to COVID-19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to facilitate their safe return to the workplace
- Must complete COVID-19 Induction Training and any other training required prior to their return to school
- Must be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices
- Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same

COVID Related Absence Management

The management of a COVID-19 related absence will be managed in line with agreed procedures with DES.

Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

The Board of Management aims to protect and support the health and wellbeing of all staff (physical, mental, spiritual etc.) both at work, whether in the school facility or at home and outside of work. The Board of Management is mindful that the support and promotion of staff health and wellbeing is particularly important in the current context where the COVID-19 pandemic has caused considerable challenges for, and disruption to, people's personal, family and social lives as well as their work arrangements.

The Board of Management aims to foster a culture and work environment that support healthy behaviours and staff wellbeing and shall continue to make health and wellbeing tools and guidance available to staff as well as organising suitable support programmes, initiatives and events.

These are challenging times for everyone. Should a staff member experience any stress or anxiety in respect of work or work arrangements, he/she should feel free to speak to the principal.

Appendix 1

Pre-Return to Work Questionnaire COVID-19

Pre-Return to Work Questionnaire COVID-19

This questionnaire must be completed by staff at least 3 days in advance of returning to work. If the answer is Yes to any of the below questions, you are advised to seek medical advice before returning to work.

Name: _____
Name of School: _____
Name of Principal: _____
Date: _____

	Questions	YES	NO
1.	Do you have symptoms of cough, fever, high temperature, sore throat, runny nose, breathlessness or flu like symptoms now or in the past 14 days?		
2.	Have you been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection in the last 14 days?		
3.	Have you been advised by the HSE that you are you a close contact of a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days?		
4.	Have you been advised by a doctor to self-isolate at this time?		
5.	Have you been advised by a doctor to cocoon at this time?		
6.	Have you been advised by your doctor that you are in the very high risk group? If yes, please liaise with your doctor and Principal re return to work.		

I confirm, to the best of my knowledge that I have no symptoms of COVID-19, am not self-isolating or awaiting results of a COVID-19 test. Please note: The organisation is collecting this sensitive personal data for the purposes of maintaining safety within the workplace in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The legal basis for collecting this data is based on vital public health interests and maintaining occupational health and will be held securely in line with our retention policy.

Signed: _____

Appendix 2

School Contact Tracing Log for Visitors

Name of School: _____

Address of School: _____

Contact Person in School for queries: _____

Contact Phone Number/email address for queries: _____

Name of Visitor	Time of Entry to school	Time of Exit from school	Reason for Visit (Contractor, Parent, Other)	If contractor name of company and address	Contact details of visitor	Date of Visit	Who the visitor met (separate line required for each person the visitor met)	Length of time spent with each person in the school

Pupil Return to School

The school will contact all families via Aladdin to advise them of the date of school re-opening and the policies and procedures that have been put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

In addition, the school will consent via Aladdin to the following:

- That I read and understand the COVID-19 Response Plan and Road Map in METNS.
- That I have read the new arrival and collection procedures which are outlined in our COVID-19 Policy and Procedure (Section attached).
- That I will maintain social distancing of 2 metres from other adults and children while at school and I will not enter the building unless I have arranged with the Principal/Teacher to do so. I will wear a face covering to protect Staff and Students.
- That if my child has been outside of Ireland in the last 14 days, they will have to quarantine for the time as per Government guidelines.
- That I will not bring my child into the school if they are unwell and will inform the school of my child's condition.
- That my child and I will wash our hands before leaving home and wash and sanitise on arrival each morning. Children will wash and sanitise their hands throughout the day as per DOE guidelines.
- I will try to ensure that my child will wear freshly washed clothes every day.
 - I will wash my child's lunchbox and drink bottle each day.
 - Children will take home all food wrappings, yogurt cartons, fruit and veg skins.
- That I will collect my child immediately if my child becomes unwell while at school
- To ensure the emergency contact number is on file is active and can be contacted.

Physical Distancing: Class Bubbles and Pods

Physical distancing is recommended to reduce the spread of infection. We will apply physical distancing in a practical and sensible way. We are advised to increase separation and decrease interaction. Children from Junior Infants to 2nd class are not expected to keep a distance. 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.

Increasing Separation will be achieved by re-configuring the classrooms to maximise physical distancing (following classroom layouts advised in Department documentation). Each class will be known as a class Bubble, and each class bubble will be divided into Pods. Pods will consist of a maximum of 7 children. Children in a pod will sit, work and play together. They will remain in the same pod for a number of weeks. The Pods within the Class Bubbles is an additional measure, to limit the extent of close contact within the Class Bubble. It will also facilitate contact tracing if required.

Sharing educational material between Pods should be avoided/minimised where possible. The teacher's desk should be at least 1m and where possible 2m away from pupils' desks. Decreasing Interaction will be achieved by decreasing the potential for children from different bubbles to interact.

There will be marked routes for various bubbles to enter and exit the school and to access their classrooms and staggered breaks will be arranged. Children will have designated areas to play in the yard.

Staff will try to maintain physical distance from children when they can, and will wear face coverings and other PPE when needed. Where possible, all teacher and SNAs should remain with the bubble of children they are allocated to and not come into contact with other groups.

Classrooms will be ventilated as much as possible eg windows will be open at all times where possible throughout the school day and afterwards.

Additional Measures to Maintain Physical Distancing Wherever Possible

- Staff and pupils should avoid sharing of personal items.
- Encourage pupils to avoid behaviours that involve hand to mouth contact (putting pens/pencils in the mouth)
- Strict avoidance of physical contact between staff must be maintained.
- Physical distance must be maintained during breaks.
- Where possible, meetings and training sessions will be conducted through virtual conferencing and/or maintaining social distancing between staff members ie by using the school hall.
- Where face-to-face meetings are absolutely necessary, the length of the meeting and the numbers attending will be kept to a minimum and participants must maintain 2m physical distance at all times.
- Staff members are encouraged not to travel to work together.
- Staff members are encouraged to use their own cars, or to walk or cycle to work.
- Staff members are asked to minimise the amount of personal items they bring to work with them.

Hand Washing and Sanitising

By following good respiratory hygiene, we protect the people around from viruses such as cold, flu and COVID-19. All pupils will be taught and practised in good hygiene practices. Good hygiene practices and washing your hands properly and regularly can help stop the spread of the virus. It is, therefore, crucial that all staff adhere to this advice and adopt the following practices as strictly as possible.

Handwashing facilities and/or hand sanitisers are available at multiple locations within the school facility and should be available in each classroom.

Do

- Wash your hands properly and often
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough and sneeze. Put used tissues into a bin and wash your hands
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Do Not

- Touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean
- Share objects that touch your mouth – for example, bottles, cups, cutlery, etc.

You should wash your hands:

- After coughing or sneezing
- Before and after eating
- Before and after preparing food
- If you were in contact with someone who has a fever or respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing)
- Before and after being on public transport
- Before and after being in a crowd (especially an indoor crowd)
- When you arrive and leave buildings
- If your hands are dirty
- After toilet use

For advice from HSE on how to wash your hands the following link will be helpful:

<https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html>

Coughing Etiquette

- Cover your mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze
- Or, cover your mouth and nose using your upper sleeve/elbow
- Dispose of the used tissue in the bins provided
- Wash your hands following the handwashing procedure.

School Bags and Lunches

A common sense approach will be followed:

- Children should not have any unnecessary items such as toys in their schoolbags.
- Choose lunchboxes, bottles and pencil cases that are easy to clean, as they need to be cleaned daily.

Toys/Resources

All toys and resources should be cleaned on a regular basis for example weekly. This will remove dust and dirt that can harbour germs.

All toys and resources should be checked for signs of damage for example breaks or cracks. If they cannot be repaired or cleaned, they should be discarded.

Arrivals and Dismissals

METNS will have staggered drop-offs and collection times, assign access points and entrances to specific classes, put one-way systems in place to reduce congestion.

All staff, parents and children are encouraged to walk, cycle or scoot to school.

Car drop-offs: There will be NO PARKING allowed in front of the school. The first lane in front of the school will be closed to traffic to allow for more space for arrival, dismissal, social distancing and for the safety of the children.

The outer two lanes will be for drop off & pick up only. Please do not arrive before your drop off/collection slot.

There will be 3 drop off times and 3 collection times:

We have staggered arrival and dismissal times grouped alphabetically A-F, G-N and O-Z. This is over a twenty-minute time frame, with 10 minutes between each group.

(If a double barreled surname is used, please use the name that appears first eg Smyth- Fagan, alphabetically use "S"). The earlier collection times in the table below refers to children in the infant classes

Term 1

Groups	Arrival	Dismissal
A-F	8.30am	1.50pm
G-M	8.40am	2.00pm
N-Z	8.50am	2.10pm

Term 2

Groups	Arrival	Dismissal
G-M	8.30am	1.50pm
N-Z	8.40am	2.00pm
A-F	8.50am	2.10pm

Term 3

Groups	Arrival	Dismissal
N-Z	8.30am	1.50pm
A-F	8.40am	2.00pm
G-M	8.50am	2.10pm

Infant dismissal: is by class groups.

Junior Infants 12.50pm	Bus for Infants 1.00pm	Senior Infants 1.10pm
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Entry to school building

- Children will be dropped off to the front of the school and make their way directly to their classrooms. Supervision will be provided in this area. Teachers will be in their classroom to receive children.
- **Emergency Exit and Yellow staircase:** First Class (Catherine) and Senior Classes (3rd – 6th) will enter the school via the exit door to the yellow staircase. All children walk on the left and socially distance.
- **Main Entrance:** Junior classes ie Junior Infants, Senior Infants, 1st class Stephanie and 2nd class, will enter the via the main building. The hall will be supervised to guide children safely to their classrooms.
- **Entrance to ASD unit:** ASD pupils only, both classes ie Butterflies and Caterpillars, arrival and dismissal.
- Children will wash and sanitise their hands, on arrival to the classroom in the morning.

Dismissal Routes

Dismissal from the classrooms will take place in a controlled manner to avoid congestion as follows:
Exit from the upstairs will be:

- via the yellow staircase for 2nd & 5th. These classes will exit the building from the yellow staircase door.
- Via the orange staircase for 6th and via the green staircase for 3rd & 4th. These classes will exit via the main school door.

Children will socially distance where possible.

Walkers / cyclists / scooters: Entry/exit from the school for walkers / cyclists / scooters will be via the new pedestrian entrance. It will be divided and sign-posted for entry and exit.

School Building Layout

Ground Floor: On the ground floor, we have six mainstream classes. Junior Infants, Senior Infants, 1st class (Stephanie) and 2nd class. The four standard configured classrooms have their own toilets and access to the yard for break times. Due to classroom shortages we have a class (Second class) in the school hall and a class using a support room (Senior Infants- Elaine), these have no in-class toilet facilities and therefore use the toilets in the hallway beside the rooms.

The ASD unit is located on the ground floor, they have all their own facilities, entrance, classrooms, yard etc. that are not shared with the rest of the school but are shared with both the butterfly and caterpillar class. Each class of 6 children is a POD but both classes makes a bubble.

The school secretary and principal's office are located at the main entrance to the school.

First Floor: Classes 1st (Catherine), 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th are located upstairs on the first floor. We have four standard configured classrooms that have their own toilet facilities. We have one class using the library room (1st class) for their classroom. This has no toilets and the children use a toilet down the corridor.

Daily RecreationTime

Each class remains in their own classroom during the day and only leaves to exit to yard for breaktime and for PE. We have 3 yards in use and break times are staggered to ensure only two class bubbles are on yard at any one time but are kept to separate ends of the yard to ensure the bubbles are kept together.

Break Times

There will be 2 x 20 min breaks (x 2) 940-10/1010-1030 & 1130-1150/12-1220. Children will play within their class bubble only. The yards will be divided in two to facilitate class bubbles. Teachers will supervise between the bubbles to encourage children to play in their designated space. Children will wash their hands on their return to the classroom.

Yard procedures

Two 20-minute breaks per day/ Two groupings

Group 1

- First Break: 9.40am -10.00am
- Second Break: 11.30am – 11.50am

Infant Yard	Back Yard	Front Yard
Junior Infants x2	Senior Infants x2	3 rd and 5 th classes

Group 2

- First Break: 10.10am – 10.30am
- Second Break: 12.00 – 12.20pm

Infant Yard	Back Yard	Front Yard
1 st class	2 nd class	4 th and 6 th classes

Teachers have been divided into supervision PODS. Teachers are grouped logically (with class group teachers/Support teachers etc.) This is aimed at reducing teacher to teacher and teacher to pupil contact.

Yards will be divided into 2 with space between class bubble. Teachers will supervise from the space between class pods to ensure class pods stay together.

Yard Supervision Schedule

	Junior Yard	Front Yard	Back Yard
Break 1	Liz	Thomas	Clare
	Angela	Mary	Elaine
	Claire/Niamh	Sinead	Marcella
	Junior Yard	Front Yard	Backyard
Break 2	Catherine	Aimee/Noreen	Noel
	Stephanie	Marie	Rob L
	Sue	Eoin	Rob P

Integration from ASD classes to the mainstream class takes place. The children from the ASD class go to the same pod each time they attend the mainstream class.

- Children need to wear layers. Classroom windows will be open for air circulation. Having layers makes it easy for children to regulate their body temperature.
- Invest in a good rain coat/jacket. The children will be going to the yard, even on wet days!

Special Education Staff

We have five special education support teachers who are assigned to classes. This limits the number of children they interact with in each school day.

Visitors/Communication

Every effort will be made to minimise the number of visitors to enter the school building.

- Parents will not be permitted to enter the school building unless by appointment. Appointments may be made to visit the school for essential purposes.
- Parents will not enter the school without a face covering. If it is an emergency, parents will enter the school with a face covering and report to Hilary in the office.
- A contact tracing log will need to be filled out by each visitor.
- You may communicate with your child's teacher in the traditional way, such as the homework diary, phone calls etc. Each class teacher will communicate with parents of their class to outline their preferred communication mode.
- Our school secretary, Hilary should be given (by parents/guardians) updated contact numbers for Parents/Guardians & Emergency contact numbers if Parents can't be contacted.

Deliveries

Where possible deliveries will be arranged outside of school time.

All suppliers are asked to provide paperless delivery dockets so there is no need for contact between staff members and the delivery driver.

Where there are heavy or bulky items are being delivered, and it is necessary for the delivery person to enter the building, the following steps must be followed:

- Delivery man will enter via the main doors
- Hand are to be sanitised.
- Delivery to be left in front entrance area
- Communication with the school secretary is through the protective Perspex screen
- If asked to sign a delivery docket, the secretary will use her own pen.

Maintenance and School Call Outs

Maintenance visits and school call-outs must take place outside of normal operational hours of the school.

- Contractor will be met at reception by school Principal or caretaker
- School Contact log to be completed
- Hands to be sanitised
- Social distancing measures to be adhered to for the duration of visit.

Parent/Guardian - Teacher Meetings

Where possible parent meetings should take place via Microsoft Teams, email or telephone. To ensure GDPR compliance, school email addresses must be used when communicating with parents.

Where absolutely necessary, parent-teacher meetings may take place on-site. However, they must be arranged by prior appointment.

The following steps should take place:

- Parents/guardians will be met at the school entrance by the particular teacher at a pre-arranged time.
- The class teacher will wear a facemask.
- Hands are to be sanitised at the hand-sanitising station.
- School Contact log to be filled in.
- A facemask must be worn by the visitor at all times while they are in the school premises.
- Social distancing of 2m is to be maintained for the duration of the visit.

Returning From Abroad

We will continue to follow government advice concerning travel in and out of Ireland. Current guidelines state that children who have returned from countries not on the Green List should not attend school immediately, but must self-isolate for a 14-day period. Parents will be advised of the need for their child/children to self-isolate in these circumstances. Parents must keep themselves informed on any changes to the Green List.

See updated list:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/8868e-view-the-COVID-19-travel-advice-list/>

Please inform the Principal or Aimee, the Lead Worker Representative if you are aware of a child returning from abroad.

Further Information

The following websites provide further information on COVID-19 and on government advice and recommendations regarding the re-opening of schools should you wish to view:

<https://www.education.ie/en/COVID-19/>

<https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>

<https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/a128d-back-to-school/?referrer=http://www.gov.ie/backtoschool/>

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Our school will provide you with the any additional information required by you to play your part in safely re-opening the school. We are really looking forward to welcoming our children back and will be doing all that we can to ensure that they return to the happy school that we know and love.

Finally, our aim remains to re-open the school in a safe manner, ensuring our children feel comfortable, safe and relaxed with their friends.