

Scoil Choluim, Ballyheerin, Fanad, Co. Donegal

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## Covid Response Plan

### Safety Statement and Risk Assessment

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment. A **risk assessment** has been conducted identifying the risk areas and activities. Control measures have been put in place to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 in Ballyheerin N.S.

### Staff Representatives

Lead Worker Representative for Covid-19: Leanne Duffy  
Covid Reponse Team: Pearl Scott, Lorraine Gallagher & Leanne Duffy

### Role of the Lead Worker Representative

In summary, the role of the Lead Worker Representative is to:

- represent all staff in the workplace regardless of role, and be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of different staff cohorts
- work collaboratively with school management to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19
- keep up to date with the latest COVID-19 public health advice
- In conjunction with school management, 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 school management with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace in line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol and current public health advice
- in conjunction with school management, monitor adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19
- conduct regular reviews of safety measures
- report any issues of concern immediately to school management and keep records of such issues and actions taken to rectify them
- consult with the school management on the school's COVID-19 Response Plan in the event of someone developing COVID-19 while in school including the location of an isolation area and a safe route to that area

- following any incident, assess with the school management any follow up action that is required
- consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace
- make representations to school management on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.

- **Principles**

Ballyheerin NS 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 the 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.

**Do not send your child/ children to school if they display any symptoms associated with Covid 19 which are:**

- High Temperature
- A Cough of any kind
- A loss of smell, taste or taste distortion
- Shortness of Breath.

Make contact and seek medical advice from your GP.

*Contact Number for Tamney Health Centre: 074-9159060*

*Contact Number for Carrigart Health Centre: 0749155163*

*Contact Number for Letterkenny Hospital: 0749125888*

If a child presents with any of the following symptoms - Cough, fever, shortness of breath or sudden loss of taste or smell - a staff member, maintaining a 2 metre distance, will supply the child with a disposable mask and take them to the isolation room. The staff member will contact the Lead Worker Representative (Leanne Duffy) immediately. The child's parents will be contacted & the principal will contact the HSE.

If a staff member presents with a suspected case they should inform the LWR, go home, self-isolate and contact their GP.

A substitute teacher will cover a class should a teacher be absent.

## **Training/ Induction**

The school will provide induction training to all staff in line with Department consultation to include

- The 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 have viewed the induction videos provided by the Department of Education and Skills prior to return to work.
- Staff are also asked to complete the HSA 'Return to Work Safely Induction Course'
- Staff will complete a 'Return to Work' form and submit to the principal by Friday 28<sup>th</sup> of August.

## **Students**

Students will receive training on the new safety measures to include-

- Hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene.
- One way circulation system and safe movement between classes.
- Lunch and break time procedures.
- Care and respect for classmates and the wider school community.
- What to do if they develop symptoms while at school.

## **Managing the risk of spread of COVID-19**

*-Wash your hands frequently*

Regular hand washing with soap and water is effective for the removal of COVID-19. Follow the HSE guidelines on handwashing:

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>

The school will ensure that all toilets are stocked with anti-bacterial soap, paper towel and a foot-operated, self-closing bin to dispose of paper towels. All toilets will be cleaned and checked as per the school toilet maintenance protocols.

*-Hand Hygiene and Hand Sanitisers*

Hand hygiene can also be achieved by the use of a hand sanitiser (when hands are clean).

Hand sanitisers are available in the following areas

- All access/exit doors
- Both classrooms/ SET room – inside the doors.
- All office/workroom areas
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth

Why? Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth.

### **Physical distancing**

- Physical distancing is recommended to reduce the spread of infection in the workplace.
- In line with Department recommendations there will be at least 1m distance between students in class.
- 1m distance will be maintained between students in the dining hall area.
- When circulating/moving between class students will be required to wear a face mask.
- During group work where social distancing is difficult students will be required to wear a mask.

### *Practice respiratory hygiene*

Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your bent elbow when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately in one of the assigned bins.

By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and Covid19.

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.

### **Classroom Organisation:**

The senior class & Múinteoir Leanne are now part of one 'bubble' and the junior class & Múinteoir Gráinne are in a different bubble.

The children will be organised groups known as 'pods'.

Desks are arranged to ensure a 1 metre distance is maintained between pupils in the junior & senior class. The junior & senior class children will be arranged in Pods and pupils will be encouraged to remain in these at all times while inside.

All teachers are asked to maintain a distance, where possible, of at least 1 metre from the pupils. Pupils are required to keep their desks clean and as clear as possible. Please ensure that they do not bring unnecessary books, toys or equipment to school.

Our Special Education Teacher, Múinteoir Roisín will work with children behind a perspex screen in the staff room.

### **What to Bring to School.**

In order to reduce the risk of spread of the virus, we must minimise items going between home and school. With that in mind:

- Settling in period during the month of September. No written homework will be given and all books (with the exception of the homework journal) will be kept in school until further notice.
- Children may bring a pencil case with stationery and colours that will be left in school. However, teachers are putting together a pack for each child that will contain all the stationary/ individual equipment that they will need (scissors, pritt stick, etc.) Please ensure that lunch boxes, water bottles and school bags are sanitised each day.
- A coat/jacket as necessary and hat/ gloves/ scarf for colder weather.

### **What to Wear to School**

Children should wear their school uniform as normal and regular washing of the uniform is advised.

### **Arrival at school**

-The school bus- Children from Cashel will sit on the right & children from Ballyheerin will sit on the left side of the bus (see plan). Families will be seated together- 11 children from Ballyheerin & 9 children from Cashel are expected to travel by bus this year & there will be 33 seats on the bus.

-Bus driver has been sent the seating plan & will call out the names of children who will disembark one by one.

-Morning Routine (9.05-9.20)- children, where possible, will remain in the back yard.

-The Yard will be sectioned. Senior class are free to use the lower side and Junior Class can use the side nearest to the field.

-Hands must be sanitised before entering the school. One dispenser will be mounted on the emergency exit door of the senior class and one outside the main door to the back door.

-Stencils and builder's paint will be used to indicate where children should stand when lining up.

-Senior class must use emergency door for entering/ leaving the yard from now on & junior class can continue as normal (main door)

## **Home Time**

The children will sanitise their hands using the hand sanitisers in the back yard/ front yard before leaving school.

Stencilled footprints will indicate where children should stand in order to line up for the bus/ collection by car.

Parents are asked not to congregate at the gates at home time or school time and to keep a safe distance from other families.

Teachers to accompany their class out to gate at home time

The teacher will assist each child to hand sanitise once inside the school.

## **Breaktimes**

The children will eat their lunch at their desks and must bring in their own utensils to/ from home. They must wipe their desks and sanitise their hands before eating.

### *Break- Times*

The back yard is split between junior & senior class. Pods from one class (J1 -2nd) can play with other pods from their class as it's outside but not with children from the senior class.

Arrangements may change given the evolving circumstances.

## **Communication with the School.**

Communication with parents will be made by email, phone call or text depending on the nature of the message.

No parents are permitted into school without an appointment. Maximum meeting time is 20 minutes and masks must be worn by teacher and parent.

## **Frequency of Hand Hygiene:**

Pupils & staff should perform hand hygiene on arrival in the morning, before eating & drinking, after using the toilet, after playing outdoors, when their hands are physically dirty & when they cough or sneeze.

Please see link from the HSE regarding hand washing.

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

Hand sanitisers will be located at all entry and exit points, inside each classroom and the staff/ SET room.

It is not necessary for children to have their own hand sanitiser as it will be available in each classroom.

## **Use of PPE –**

**Face shields will be worn by all staff members for the duration of the school day.**

**Further PPE will 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 a very high risk category.*
- The use of disposable gloves is not generally appropriate but may be necessary for intimate care settings.*

**Distancing in the Classroom:**

Only pupils from 3rd – 6th have to physically distance. At the Junior Level, pupils should be kept as much as possible in their own pod (groups of pupils who sit 1m apart but partake in the same activities).

**School Activities:**

There will be no tin whistle, swimming, gymnastics or athletics until further notice.

-P.E. We hope to carry on with class PE lessons. Any equipment used which will be cleaned after every use.

-Toys – All toys/ equipment that has been used will be left in a designated area in the classroom and cleaned. Teachers should aim to keep a minimum of toys in their classroom and soft toys/educational toys must be machine washable.

-Only games/ toys / activities that have been pre-approved by the classroom teacher can be used by children if they are inside during break-time which will then be taken to the designated area for sanitising. Storage of books & personal belongings: All books will be kept in school until further notice. No balls, games or toys are to be brought in from home.

-Electronic Equipment: Shared devices will be cleaned after use using disposable wipes by the teacher. Siblings will share laptops and yoga mats which will be labelled accordingly.

-All children must hand sanitise before and after using devices and on accessing library books.

**School Cleaning:** The school will be cleaned throughout the day as much as possible (i.e. toilet seats, door handles etc.) and thoroughly at the end of every day. Extra cleaning will take place at the weekends as necessary.

## **Changes to the Attendance Policy**

Parents are requested to email/ call or text the office to inform the school of a student's absence or late arrival to school.

## **Photocopying/printing**

Students are no longer permitted to retrieve photocopying material from the office/workroom or print material in school.

## **First Aid/emergency procedure**

The standard First Aid/Emergency procedure shall continue to apply in Ballyheerin 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 or nearest first aider giving details of location and type of medical incident.

## **Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19**

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

## **Isolation Room**

**(The storage room next to the senior room).**

The designated isolation area is behind a closed door with a glass pane and away from other staff and pupils.

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while at work, the following are the procedures which will be implemented.

If the person with the suspected case is a pupil, the parents/guardians will be contacted immediately. The person will be accompanied to the isolation room 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.

A mask will be provided 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.

The person accompanying the symptomatic person is required to wear a mask.

**The symptomatic pupil must be collected within 30 minutes from the school by a parent/guardian.**

The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects.

Advice will 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 bin provided.

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/student confidentiality is essential at all times.

### **Curriculum:**

The following areas will be concentrated upon initially - Literacy, Maths, P.E & SPHE as per Department Guidelines. Specific lessons need to be taught dealing with hand & personal hygiene under the SPHE programme.

Additional consideration & support will be given to pupils with Special Education Needs in order to help implement our school's specific protocols.

Múinteoir Roisín will continue to support pupils on a withdrawal & in class basis.

**Please Note: This document was drawn up using the DES guidelines. These guidelines however are a living document and may be reviewed and amended to take into account new guides from Gov.ie.**

Signed: Leanne Duffy  
(Principal)

Signed: Fr. Pat McGarvey  
(Chairperson)

Date 18 August 2020

