



Tuam Educate Together N.S.

Covid 19 Response Plan – Information for Parents

Hygiene and Cleaning

Sanitiser dispensers will be installed at each entrance for adult use. Soap and warm water will be available in all classrooms and toilets. Children should bring a small, clean hand towel in a labelled zip lock bag each day for use in the classroom. Recyclable paper towels will be provided in the toilets. Hand hygiene will be promoted and encouraged, and parents/guardians are asked to support the school in reinforcing this message.

Handwashing Regime for Children

Time
Upon entering classroom in the morning
Before eating at small break
After returning from yard
Before eating at big break
After returning from yard
After using toilet
After returning from individual or small group work with SNA or SET
After cough or sneeze or when visibly dirty

In accordance with the DES guidelines, touch point wipe downs will be performed by the school staff throughout the day. Particular attention will be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, handrails, chairs/arm rests, desks, sink and toilet facilities.

All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area.

Changes to Classroom Layouts

The DES guidelines recognise that a common-sense approach is needed in our primary schools. To that end, every effort will be made to limit interaction within classrooms, to limit contact between class groups and to limit the sharing of common facilities. The children and their teachers will work in class bubbles. A class bubble is a grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible. The aim of the

system within the school is that class groupings mix only with their own class - from arrival at school in the morning until the children go home at the end of the school day. It is recognised that younger children are unlikely to maintain physical distancing indoors so there is no requirement for children from Junior Infants to 2nd class to maintain a physical distance within their class bubble.

Children from 3rd class to 6th class will be distanced insofar as is practicable, and separated into pods. 1m distancing will be in place between pods. Excess furniture, soft furnishings and class libraries have been removed from classes.

Learning Support

In keeping with our special educational needs (SEN) policy, learning support will be provided by a blended approach of in-class and withdrawal support. Initially, the focus will be primarily on welcoming the children back, giving them a chance to speak about how they feel, and establishing relationships and routines. The provision of support will be organised to ensure our support teachers will work within the confines of the minimum amount of class bubbles.

- Where a support teacher is working alongside a class teacher in a classroom, both teachers must be mindful of maintaining social distance from one another.
- Where children receive support in one of the SEN rooms, social distancing of 1 metre will be maintained between each child in the group. Only pupils from the same class bubble may be withdrawn together for SEN purposes
- The tables and chairs in SEN rooms will be wiped clean in between different groups attending. Where possible, resources in SEN settings will be stored in individual pouches for each child in order to limit sharing, and the pouches can then be wiped and sanitised.
- SNAs will continue to provide support and will wear appropriate PPE. They will bring the children outside as much as possible.

Entrance and Exit Points for Specific Classes

To facilitate pupils arriving with pupils entering and exiting the grounds safely, we ask that no pupils be present on school grounds before 8.40am. From 8.40am to 9.00am when classes begin, school staff will be supervising children in the classrooms. Senior infants and 1st class should use the original door used last year. Second class should use the fire escape door (the first door closest to the yard) and 3rd, 4th and 5th should use the new door. Social distancing markers have been painted on the ground. It is imperative that pupils are supervised until 8.40 am when school staff will open the doors. Please see the video on our Facebook page illustrating the

correct doors. Junior infants will begin school at 9.30 and will also use the fire escape door. Parents should say goodbye to the children at the yead gate.

As always, adequate parking is a challenge for our school and all the schools on the Dublin Road. There is limited parking available in the school yard. Please do not park on the avenue. Parking is also available on Dublin Road and in the Tusla car park and in the old court house. We would encourage as many families to walk or cycle to school. Children from 3rd class can walk to and from school alone provided a parent has signed a permission slip. Please contact Debra if you would like a slip emailed to you. If your child is walking to school, please ensure they do not arrive before 8.40 as they will not be supervised.

After school, Junior infants will use the front door to exit (check school booklist for finishing times), senior infants will also use front door at 1.30. At 2.30 1st and 2nd class will exit via the front door and 3rd, 4th and 5th will exit via rear door. Teachers will bring out one class at a time so bubbles will not mix.

It is imperative that parents wear face masks in the yard and practice social distancing.

Lunches

Pupils will be given time to eat lunch in class as usual. We will be asking parents to remind pupils to eat directly from their lunch boxes, and not to use the surface of the table to place their food on. Please remind children that sharing of food is not permitted. Lunch boxes and drinks bottles should be washed thoroughly, inside and out, each day. The school will not be able to provide spoons or cups if they are forgotten.

There will be staggered break times. The yard will be divided up into 3 zones and 3 classes will go outside at the same time using 3 separate doors. . There will be 2 separate small breaks and 2 lunch breaks and students will have access to their class zone on the yard during their allotted break time.

PE

PE should take place outdoors as much as possible and equipment should be cleaned between class groupings. We will also have access to the Tusla Hall on Wednesdays and Thursdays for PE, Drama and other activities that require more space. Classes may also take additional breaks outside during the school day.

Pupils' Equipment and Stationery

- Children will need to be provided with a full set of their own stationery for school. This should be kept in school and separate items should be kept at home for homework as necessary.

- It is further requested that all items have the child's name on them for ease of identification.

Shared Equipment

By necessity, some classroom equipment will be shared including tablets, maths resources and the equipment used for structured activities and play in infant classrooms. Cleaning of such shared equipment with wipes or other cleaning products will take place after use to minimise the risk of the spread of infection.

PPE

The Department of Education advise that facemasks should be worn by all staff who cannot maintain a 2m social distance from pupils. The BoM is supplying all staff with visors and the other personal protection equipment they will need. Gloves and aprons will also be provided for intimate care or first aid.

Ventilation

Where practical, all internal windows or doors will be left open (where appropriate) to minimise hand contact with common surfaces. To ensure that classrooms are well ventilated, windows will be kept open as often as possible.

Assembly

Whole school assemblies will not take place for the foreseeable future.

Wet Days

On wet days the classes will remain indoors. The staff on duty will supervise from the classroom door and only enter the room if absolutely necessary. Senior classes will stay in their pods.

Corridors and toilets

Briefly passing someone in a hall is very unlikely to contribute significantly to the spread of infection if people do not have physical contact and avoid informal group gatherings. We will teach the children to keep to the left when in the corridors.

Children from JI, SI and 1st will use the original toilets. Children from 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th will use the new toilets. Only two pupils from any class will be permitted to go to the toilet at a time. There will be social distancing markers on the floor outside the toilet. This will prevent congregation of groups from different bubbles. Children will wash hands after using the toilet and use disposable, recyclable paper to dry hands. Separate blue bins are installed in toilets for the paper.

Teacher Absence and Substitution

In the event that a teacher is unable to attend school, we will secure a substitute teacher for the class. In the event that a substitute teacher is not available, a member of the SET will supervise the class. The children who have missed out on special education time on that day will have their time banked and provided on another day

when a substitute is available. The class will not be divided into groups and accommodated in other classes.

Collection of Children during the School Day

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

- When the adult arrives at the school, they should either phone the office or use the intercom at the front door to alert the office that they have arrived.
- The child will be brought from their class to the adult by a member of staff. No adult can enter the school building unless an appointment has been arranged.

Children Who Should Not Attend School

If your child is in one of the following categories, they should not attend school –

- Children who have been diagnosed with Covid-19.
- Children who have been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with Covid-19.
- Children who have a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending.
- Children who have been in contact with a person who has a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending.
- Children with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school.
- Children who have returned home after travelling abroad from a non green list country and must self-isolate for a period of 14 days.
- Children who are generally unwell.

Impact of a Suspected or Confirmed Case of Covid-19 in a Class

If the school is notified that a person in your child's class has a suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19

- Public health advice will be sought and followed.

Illness and Absences - Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19

Pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19. If a pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while in the building, the following are the procedures will be implemented:

- Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately – please ensure all contact details are up to date and in use, and also provide the name and number of a contact who will be in a position to collect a child **promptly**.
- The child will be accompanied to the designated isolation area via the isolation route by a member of staff. The staff member will remain at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic child and will also make sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic child at all times

- A mask will be provided for the child presenting with symptoms. He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises
- An assessment will be made as to whether the child who is displaying symptoms can immediately be brought home by parents and call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home
- The school will facilitate the child presenting with symptoms to remain in isolation, if they cannot immediately go home, and will assist them by calling their GP.
- If the child is well enough to go home, the school will arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible, and advise them to inform their GP 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, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick child is a Covid-19 suspect.
- Arrangements will be made for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.

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

Children with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school.

Parents should seek advice from their GP/consultant if they think their child is in a very high-risk group. If they are advised not to attend, then the parents should furnish the school with a letter containing words to this effect. The school will then support the child with his/her learning.

What is happening with homework?

For the first week, there will be no homework. The staff are currently discussing homework procedures for the rest of the year. We will let you know when we have finalised these procedures.

Can I send in a bottle of sanitiser with my child?

Yes, but please remind your child it is for personal use and it may only be used with the permission of the teacher. Such items regularly spill in school bags or around the

classroom and are often inadvertently handled by many children. Regulations stipulate that children should not have independent use of containers of alcohol gel.

Can my child wear a facemask?

It is not recommended that children attending primary school or preschool/childcare settings wear face-coverings. If you would like your child to wear a face mask then this will be permitted in school. School staff will not touch the covering or be in a position to help the child with it. Please trial a face covering with your child for one full day before sending them to school with same.

Will staff be wearing facemasks?

Yes, either face masks or visors are mandatory for all staff.

Will parent/teacher meetings be taking place?

We are awaiting further guidance on this.

What if I need to speak with my child's teacher?

Please contact Debra in the office or your child's teacher via email.

What happens if my child's teacher is out sick?

Every effort to find a substitute will be made. If one cannot be found, the SEN teachers will be asked to teach the class.

What happens if my child forgets their lunch or books?

The school will contact you so you can drop one to the school for your child. There will be a box outside the front door in the porch for such drop-offs. Please phone the school once the drop-off has been made.

My child has hay fever and sneezes quite a bit, will he/she be sent home?

If your child has an underlying condition such as hay fever (as many of us have) please make sure the class teacher is aware. Sneezing or runny nose is a sign of Covid 19.

What if my child is sent home with a suspected case of Covid 19?

We would advise that you contact your GP/HSE for further advice. If a child is unwell they should, under no circumstances, be sent back to school.

Are parents permitted in the school building?

No, not unless collecting a pupil presenting with Covid 19 symptoms or they have received prior permission. Debra will be available in the office from 9.30 to 12.30 daily. There will be no access to the office at drop off. School access will only be permitted if you have made an appointment in advance.

Are 3rd to 6th classes in “pods”?

At the start of the school year we will be distancing pupils as much as possible, with approximately 1m between all students. This will not eliminate pupils from interacting with each other or prevent talk and discussion. Pods may be alternated at various stages throughout the year.

What happens if my child falls on yard/gets a bump or cut?

Our first aid policy will be followed, but staff are required to wear PPE to apply first aid.

Why can some of the classes not mix? They are playing soccer/GAA together anyway!

That may be the case for some of the pupils, but our procedures are governed by Dept. of Education guidelines, which state that every effort must be made to limit the amount of contact between “bubbles”. We do not adhere to the guidelines of other sporting /social organisations.

Will teachers talk to the children about Covid 19?

Yes, from day one we will be reteaching cough etiquette, hand hygiene, reinforcing the idea of social distancing/reduced physical contact, and chatting (in an age appropriate way) about Covid 19. The aim will be on reassurance and promoting calmness and safety.

Will pre-school/ after-school service be available?

Yes, please contact Judy for further information.

Will the school be cleaned each day?

Yes, the BOM have employed a professional cleaning company. A deep clean will be performed before the children return to school. The company will clean the school during the week and school staff will perform regular touch point wipe downs throughout the day. Each staff member will perform a thorough cleaning at the end of each day to include sanitisation of children’s tables and chairs, their own workspace, interactive boards, light switches, door handles, sinks, taps and soap dispensers.

What will be the most difficult issue for schools and parents?

When children display symptoms of Covid 19. We will have to ring you and you will have to come and collect your child immediately. Your child will have to be brought to the isolation area. These are the government guidelines. We are not qualified to make a distinction between Covid 19 symptoms and symptoms of other illnesses. Be prepared. Make arrangements for your child to be collected in the event of a phone call.

Will this document be updated?

Yes. It is an evolving situation and we will most likely have to change elements of it when we observe it in practice. We will be reviewing our procedures constantly. We will also be in contact with you closer to the return to school date with more information.