

Toonagh National School



Covid-19 Response Plan August 2020

Re-opening Plan August 2020

1. Introduction:

We look forward to re-opening our school on August 27th and we need to be aware that there will be challenges ahead.

Our school will operate under new norms. As a school community we will have to adapt quickly to new and revised practices and procedures many of which are detailed in this policy. The Health, Safety and Well-being of all members of our school community are of paramount importance to us all.

Procedures in this plan have been put in place in line with HSE and Department of Education and Skills advice and guidance. 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.

In the plan attached we have made every effort to implement practical and sensible measures to help avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into our school. Covid-19 poses a serious risk to us all and while we are delighted to be allowed to reopen the school we want to make every effort that we can stay open and not have to close for a period of time again. Each and every individual must play their part.

This plan and procedures are in place until Halloween mid-term break and we will review them. There will also undoubtedly be unforeseen challenges and these will be dealt with as they arise.

2. Guiding Principles:

Through the implementation of the practices and procedures as outlined in this plan our school community aims to:

- Do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into our school.
- Reduce the likelihood of the spread of Covid-19, insofar as possible, within our school if introduced.
- Detail for all members of our school community how our school will reopen for all students from the 27th of August.
- Balance the need for a practical and sensible level of caution with the need to provide a supportive environment for teaching and learning.

3. Social Distancing:

- The children and their teachers will work in Class Bubbles. Each Classroom is a 'Bubble' which stays apart from other classes as much as possible. The aim within the school is that children from one classroom mix only with children from their own classroom from arrival at school in the morning until the children go home at the end of the school day. As per the guidelines children from each classroom cannot interact during the school day.
- Junior Infants – 2nd Class: The Government guidelines state that from Junior Infants to 2nd class physical distancing of 1 metre 'is not a prerequisite to reopening a primary school'. In Toonagh NS *pupils in Junior Infants – 2nd Class will be seated in pods or groups.*
- 3rd- 6th Class: Children from 3rd – 6th class will be arranged in Pods within their Class Bubbles. As far as possible, each Pod will be at least 1 metre distance from the next Pod. All unnecessary furniture is being removed from these classrooms to create as much space as possible.

4. Morning Drop Off:

- The school will be open to receive children from **the earlier time of 9.05am** each morning. Children may be dropped to school any time between **9.05am and 9.20am. Children will go directly to their class rooms.** For the beginning of the school year, while pupils get familiar with the new routines, teachers will be in their room to meet the children. Thereafter there will

Re-opening Plan August 2020

be teachers on supervision duty every morning in order to have school doors open from 9.05am and to supervise the children going to their classroom and to their pods.

- We hope that this window of 15 minutes for drop off before school every morning from 9.05am to 9.15am will help avoid any congestion and minimise the risk of children from different class bubbles interacting on the school grounds, which the guidelines currently does not allow.
Please do not send children into the school before 9.05am. Our supervision will start at 9.05am each morning and doors will be open at this time.
- In line with the guidelines, no adults, other than staff members or essential visitors, should enter the school grounds unless by prior arrangement.
- Exceptions to this are the Junior Infant Parents for a settling in period and they were made aware of the procedures at the Junior Infant Induction Day recently. For Senior Infant Parents until Friday September 4th, they may drop their children to the school door. **Parents entering the school grounds or building must wear a face covering.**

5. Entry Doors:

To minimise interaction between class bubbles, pupils will enter and exit the school building through the door assigned to their class in the morning, evening and break times. The doors will have signs on them indicating which door each class should use.

- *Junior and Senior Infants will use the middle brown door at Reception*
- *1st and 2nd class will use the brown door by Ms. Brosnan's classroom*
- *3rd and 4th class will use the back door into Mr. Eustace's classroom*
- *5th and 6th class will use the white door by Ms. Cullinan's classroom*
**Please rest assured the school staff will show and explain all of this to the children on the first number of mornings to get them used to this procedure.*

6. Entering the school grounds:

- The school bus will arrive between 9.05 and 9.20 and park at the main gate. The main gate is for entry for the children from the school bus.
- All other children are asked to enter via the Pedestrian Gate and make their way to their classroom.
- For the parents that park at the top of the school near the hall, the children will enter the school grounds via the steps at the back of the school by the basketball court and make their way to the classroom.

7. After-school collection:

- Junior & Senior Infants will finish at 2pm daily (apart from first 2 and half weeks settling in period for Junior Infants who finish at 12.30pm).
- We have 80 children from 1st-6th class leaving each evening. Therefore, to minimise congestion and to minimise contact the following times will be in place until Halloween and we will review then:

1st & 2nd Class will leave the school at 2.55pm

3rd & 4th Class will leave the school at 3.00pm

5th & 6th Class will leave the school at 3.05pm

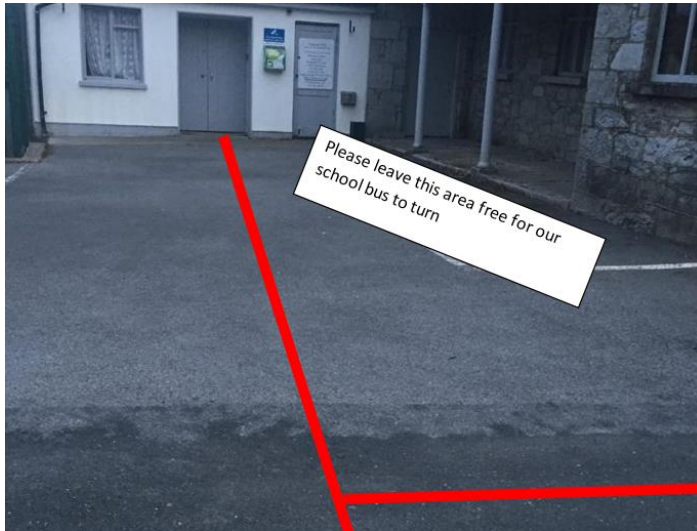
Please collect your child at the designated time. Parents can collect children at the pedestrian gate. Otherwise we recommend that students go directly to their car if they can see their parent's car.

**For children going home on the bus, the buses will arrive at 2.55pm.*

**For children attending Teach Spraoi afterschool we will be in contact with Teach Spraoi to arrange collection procedures.*

8. Parking:

- Our Basketball Court is currently being renovated and resurfaced. This work is not yet complete and therefore for the first two and a half weeks, all staff cars will park in the Basketball Court (Please only staff cars in here as it is not safe for children to be in this area). We hope that this will help provide more parking spaces for parents along the road and a few extra parking spaces near Toonagh Hall. This will help ease the pressure of parking around the school while we get our systems up and running.
- As always please leave the space directly in front of Toonagh Hall free for our school buses to turn.



- At all times leave the yellow box directly in front of the school gate free for our school bus to park here. At all times leave the white box marked BUS in front on the school wall free



- We ask if possible that parents would have cars turned in the direction of travel each day to help with flow of traffic.
- We request that you do not turn your car in any of our neighbours' driveways.
- Thank you in advance for your co-operation in this matter. The continued safety of all our children is of utmost importance.

9. Break times:

Children will play in set zones in our school grounds. Class Bubbles will not mix at break times. On wet days Pupils will remain indoors seated in the classroom in their pods and watch an age appropriate content on the Interactive Whiteboard.

Re-opening Plan August 2020

10. Lunches:

Please remind your children not to share their food or drinks with other children. Please make sure they have enough drinks to last them throughout the day as we will not be in a position to refill drinks bottles. Children will eat their lunches at their desks. No food will be allowed onto the yard.

11. Uniforms:

- There is no guidance or advice to say that school uniforms or tracksuits should be washed every day and this is not practical for most families. However, children's uniforms should be clean and washed regularly as a child may have coughed or sneezed into their sleeve as per coughing protocols.
- Children will wear their school uniform on Monday, Wednesday and Thursdays. Tracksuits will be worn on Tuesdays and Fridays as children will have PE on these days. Uniforms or tracksuits should be taken off straight after the child arrives home from school for the day. They should not be worn in after-school facilities, shops, during after-school activities, etc.

12. Collection of Children during the School Day:

If an adult has to collect a child during the course of the school day, please give prior notice to the school. When the adult arrives at the school, the child will be brought from their class to the adult by a member of staff. The adult who is collecting will be asked to sign the child out.

13. Communicating with the school:

- In line with the guidelines parents are not permitted to enter the school building. Please make an appointment for essential purposes.
- A contact tracing log will be kept for visiting adults.
- All adults that enter the school grounds must wear a face covering.
- You can contact the school through the secretary (Noelette) who is in school on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. School contact details are 065-6820143 or via email at toonaghschool@gmail.com. Outside of these days we try to check the school voicemail end of the school day. Another option for communication is to use the homework journal note section. (Please contact Noelette if you have changed phone number or email address)
- Aladdin epayments for school payment requests will be used to minimise the amount of cash that needs to be handled.

14. Hygiene:

- Hand hygiene is crucially important. We would kindly ask that ahead of their return, you reinforce correct hand washing techniques and cough etiquette with your child. Hands have to be washed each morning before your child comes to school.
- Each bathroom is equipped with foam soap dispensers and paper hand towels.
- Hand sanitiser is available all throughout our school. Hand washing/Sanitising will take place in each class at the recommended times during the day such as:
 - On arrival and leaving school
 - Before eating
 - After using the toilet
 - After playing outdoors.

15. Cleaning:

- The school cleaner will clean the school every day. Our school cleaning regime has increased in frequency and also in thoroughness. Pupils desks will be cleaned on a daily basis along with many other measures. The school cleaner will be in for 3 hours each day.
- Before small break and big break, light switches and door handles will be cleaned in all classrooms and Special Education Rooms.

Re-opening Plan August 2020

- Toys will be cleaned and rotated as appropriate in accordance with best practice guidelines

16. Face Coverings:

- According to Department advice, primary school children will not be required to wear face coverings under any circumstances.
- Where a 2m distance from pupils or from other staff cannot be maintained staff will wear a face covering. Choice of face covering (mask or visor) can be a personal decision.

17. School Books:

All rental books on our book rental scheme are assigned to one child for the year and are covered with wipeable contact. Please cover all other books and copies with contact or a similar wipeable covering.

18. Sharing:

While we have always encouraged children to share and have shared resources between children and classes in the past, for the foreseeable future we will be doing the very opposite. Each child will have their belongings in a plastic box and should not share with others. Toonagh NS we will provide a plastic box for every pupil where they will keep their belongings at their desk and avoid sharing of common items.

19. Signage informing members of the school community with the relevant procedures in relation to Covid-19 are displayed throughout the school.

20. Teaching and Learning:

- As a staff, we are very aware that the children have been away from school since March 12th. We appreciate the time and effort that went into Distance Learning. We recognise the challenges that Home Learning presented for all families.
- The Department of Education and Skills has published Curriculum guidelines for us, and we ask you to trust our experience and professional expertise as we work with all the children during the return to school.

21. Homework will be given in Toonagh NS. Our main focus though at the start of the school year will be on wellbeing, establishing routines, settling back in and on resuming schoolwork will be priority for the initial period. Therefore, there will be no homework for the first two weeks in 1st- 6th class until Thursday September 10th. Homework will be introduced in these classes on Monday September 14th.

22. Lead Worker and Deputy Lead Worker:

A Lead Worker Representative (Claire Cullinan) and a Deputy Lead worker (Maelisa Malone) have been appointed. They will undergo training. Their role is to liaise with the in-school management team and to monitor compliance with the school's Covid-19 response plan.

23. Staff Training and Return to Work Protocol:

All staff in the school are undertaking Covid-19 Induction Training prior to reopening the school. All staff will be provided with the Return to Work (RTW) form and it will be given to the Principal 3 days in advance of staff returning to work.

24. Unwell pupils:

- While all children will be welcome back to school, we would remind parents that pupils with high temperature, cough, breathing difficulties, flu-like symptoms or loss of taste or smell must

Re-opening Plan August 2020

be kept at home. Pupils should also be kept at home if generally unwell. Children who display such symptoms in school will be isolated and parents asked to collect them from the school. We will be very conscious that this will need to be done in a child-friendly and caring manner.

- If you wish to, you may inform your child that if he/she reports unwell to the class teacher, that they may be brought to a special room, called the 'Medical Room' until collected by parent.
- Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19 in the school will be in line with the procedures published in the DES guidelines.

25. Staff Absences:

The sequence for covering all teacher absences will be in accordance with DES circular 0045/2020.

26. Visiting teachers and coaches:

Should visiting teachers or coaches visit the school and they shall be given clear guidelines about social distancing/sharing equipment and children will remain in their own bubbles for such activities.

27. After-School Sports and Activities:

It is not recommended that children from different bubbles would participate in extra-curricular activities at the same time in school. For the foreseeable future all of these activities are suspended and we certainly hope to provide them in the future depending on the guidelines.

28. Wellbeing:

More than ever in these uncertain times the area of Wellbeing will be so important. We will work on the recommended five principles to support the wellbeing of all our pupils and staff. We will be promoting in the school:

- A sense of safety
- A sense of calm
- A sense of belonging and connectedness to school
- A sense of self-efficacy and school-community efficacy and finally
- A SENSE OF HOPE

Thank you in advance for your co-operation and continued support.

Thank you to our excellent staff and Board of Management who are working so hard to put measures in place so that our school can re-open in a safe manner on Thursday, August 27th.

We are really looking forward to welcoming the children back to school.

In the meantime, keep safe and see you on the 27th.

Gearóid Roughtan

Principal

Marie Slattery

Chairperson