

Toonagh National School



Covid-19 Response Plan

Ratified August 24th 2020

Revised February 26th 2021

Revised August 25th 2021

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1. Introduction:

A revision of our COVID-19 Response Plan is necessary to ensure that it is in compliance with the Department of Education's COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable operation of Primary Schools (V4 August 2021). The COVID-19 Response Plan of Toonagh NS is designed to support the staff and Board of Management (BOM) in putting measures in place that aim to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in our school environment.

This COVID-19 Response Plan for Toonagh N.S. is a working document that initially was used for the reopening of Toonagh N.S. in August 2020. Due to the latest "COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable operation of Primary and Special Schools" Document (V4 August 2021) this response plan is being reviewed again. This plan is designed to support the staff and Board of Management in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Toonagh N.S. 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 national protocols and minimise the risk to students, staff and others. 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 "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. The assistance and cooperation of all staff, pupils, parents/ guardians, contractors and visitors is critical to the success of the plan. This Response Plan will support the sustainable re-opening 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.

As we re-open for the start of the 2021-2022 school year it is essential that all members of our school community play their part by adhering to government and school procedures. The Health, Safety and Well-being of all members of our school community is of paramount importance to us all. 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 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 is a working document. We will review where necessary and in line with new guidance issued. There will also undoubtedly be unforeseen challenges and these will be dealt with as they arise.

2. Aims:

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 Monday the 30th 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. COVID-19 Policy Statement:

The Board of Management, In School Management Team and Staff of Toonagh N.S. have reviewed current processes to ensure that the following has been given serious and ongoing consideration in light of updated guidelines issued in August 2021:

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

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

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

Ratification:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Toonagh N.S. on 24th of August 2020

Signed on behalf of the Board of Management by:

Date: 24th August 2020

Marie Slattery

Chairperson

Update and Review:

This Policy was updated and reviewed by the Board of Management of Toonagh National School on 26/02/21.

Signed: Marie Slattery

Date: 26th February 2021

(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Update and Review:

This Policy was updated and reviewed by the Board of Management of Toonagh National School on 25/08/21.

Signed: Marie Slattery

Date: 25th of August 2021

(Chairperson, Board of Management)

4. Know the symptoms of Covid-19:

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms (which includes the DELTA variant). They are:

- High temperature (38 degrees Celsius or above)
- A new cough – this can be any kind of cough, not just dry
- Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties –
- Loss or change in your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot you cannot smell or taste anything or things smell or taste different to smell.
- Fatigue
- Aches and Pains

Other uncommon symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- Sore throat
- Headaches
- Runny or stuffy noses
- Feeling sick or vomiting

5. Minimising the Risk of Introduction of COVID-19 into our school:

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

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

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

5.1 Our Practices and Procedures

5.1.1 Promoting Awareness

- All members of our school community will actively promote awareness of COVID-19 symptoms.
- Signage informing members of the school community of the symptoms of Covid-19 and the need for social distancing will be displayed at all access points to the school.
- All members of the school community will embed in pupils the need for appropriate respiratory hygiene and hand hygiene.
- Staff members will thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day.
- Staff and pupils are to self-isolate or restrict their movements at home if they display any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 and contact their family doctor to arrange a test
- Staff and pupils are not to return to or attend school in the event of the following:
 - If they are identified by the HSE as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19
 - If they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus

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- If they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.
- Staff and pupils are to cooperate with any public health officials and the school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice in the event of a case or outbreak in the school;

5.1.2 Attendance at school

- Members of the school community who display symptoms of Covid-19 **MUST NOT ATTEND or VISIT OUR SCHOOL** and should immediately phone their doctor and follow HSE guidance on self-isolation;
- Members of the school community **MUST NOT ATTEND OR VISIT OUR SCHOOL** if they have been identified by the HSE as a contact for person with COVID-19 and must follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement;
- Staff and pupils that develop symptoms at school must promptly bring this fact to the attention of the Principal, Deputy Principal, as appropriate.
- Staff and pupils must know the protocol for managing a suspected case of COVID-19 in school as detailed in Section 8 of the DES Guidelines.
- Everyone entering the school building must perform hand hygiene using hand sanitiser provided at each entrance and in all classrooms and support rooms.
- Visits to the school by all persons other than staff and pupils will be by appointment only. Appointments must be arranged in advance through the school office, by phone on 065 6820143 or by e mail at toonaghschool@gmail.com
- Each visitor to the school who moves beyond the reception area will be required to complete a Contract Tracing Log form irrespective of the duration of the visit.
- Each visitor to the school will be required to wear a **face mask** irrespective of the duration of the visit. Visitors are expected to arrive at the school wearing a **face mask**.
- Physical Distancing of 2m should be maintained between staff and all visitors to the school.

5.1.3 Respiratory Hygiene

All members of our school community **MUST** practice and actively promote good respiratory hygiene at home and at school as this will help protect people around us from viruses such as flu and Covid-19.

Good respiratory hygiene entails:

- Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your bent elbow when you cough or sneeze.
- Disposing of the used tissue immediately and safely into a nearby bin.
- Pedal bins have been purchased for all classrooms and toilets. Bins are available in all rooms/toilets. These bins will be emptied daily.

5.1.4 Hand 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.
- Posters are displayed at each hand washing station throughout the school showing effective hand washing technique.

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- All persons entering the school building must perform hand hygiene using the sanitisers provided.
- Hand sanitiser is available all throughout our school. The sanitiser we have sourced is certified to kill Covid-19 and it lasts on your hands for up to 6 hours. 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
- Hand washing facilities are available always after activities that are likely to soil hands, for example playing outside or certain sporting activities as hand sanitiser does not work on dirty hands.
- Alcohol based sanitiser must not be stored near heat or naked flame.

HSE guidelines on handwashing are available at: <https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html>

Hand hygiene can be achieved by hand washing or use of a hand sanitiser (when hands look clean).

5.1.5 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.
- Before small break and big break, light switches and door handles will be cleaned in all classrooms and Special Education Rooms.
- Toys will be cleaned and rotated as appropriate in accordance with best practice guidelines

5.1.6 Physical Distancing

- Maintaining physical distancing in the school environment is one of the key control measures to minimize the risk of the introduction and spread of COVID-19.
- 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.
- Physical distancing will be usefully applied in our school allowing for some flexibility when needed. It will be applied in a practical way that recognises that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on this issue.

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Physical distancing in our school will look different across the various ages and stages of learning.

- It is recognised that it is not always possible for staff to maintain physical distance from pupils and it is not appropriate that they would always be expected to do so where this could have a detrimental impact on the pupil i.e. if a child sustains an injury and requires first aid.
- All adult visitors to the school, as scheduled by appointment, **MUST** maintain a 2m distance from school staff.
- Our school community is committed to the two principles of physical distancing, namely, increasing separation and decreasing interaction, as a means of minimising the risk of the introduction of Covid-19 to our school.

5.1.7 Increasing Separation

In order to minimise contact between pupils, insofar as possible, the school will operate the following procedures for arrival, dismissal, movement through the school and break times.

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 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 mask.**

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. Garrahy'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.*

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Entering the school grounds:

- The school bus will drop children off 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 drop off at the top of the school near the basketball court, 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. However we do not encourage this as there is a building site near this area and we wish to keep this area free at all times for cars to turn.

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.*

- If any children wish to leave the school via the back gate and steps near the Basketball Court, parents/adults must collect them from here and be visible as we will not allow any child leave through this gate unsupervised due to cars turning and the building site in this area.

Parental responsibilities on Arrival and Collection:

- Parents must arrive on time for dropping off and collecting their child.
- Only parents or carers who are well and have no symptoms of COVID-19 or who have served the required quarantine time of 14 days where advised are allowed to drop off and collect children.
- Any parent who is in a high risk category should not drop off or collect children in order to protect themselves. (This of course is at the discretion of the individual parent/carer/grandparent's discretion)
- Parents must not congregate in groups or stand around chatting.
- Parents must ensure their child remains at their side at all times and that their child does not interact with other children.
- At arrival and departure times of children, social distancing is to be maintained by children and parents.
- Under no circumstances are parents and carers to gather in groups while waiting for the children.

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Parking:

- There is building works currently taking place in Toonagh Hall. This work is not yet complete. There will be a number of workers coming and going and using the area directly in front of the hall for parking, this area will be a building site. Therefore, temporarily 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).
- Please do not park in front of the Basketball Court as per the photo attached. This space in front of the basketball court is to be left free for our school buses to turn and for cars to turn.



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- 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.

6. Changes to Classroom and School Layout and to School Routines

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.

6.1 Junior Infants to Second Class:

It is recognised that younger children are unlikely to maintain physical distancing indoors so there is no requirement for children from Junior Infants to Second Class to maintain a physical distance within their Class Bubble.

6.2 Third Class to Sixth Class:

Children from Third Class to Sixth Class will be arranged in Pods within their Class Bubbles, with 4 pupils per Pod where possible. As far as possible, each Pod will be at least 1 metre distance from the next Pod. All unnecessary furniture has been removed from these classrooms to create as much space as possible.

6.3 Pods:

Class teachers will assign the pupils to the particular Pods having consulted with the previous class teacher.

6.4 Team Teaching/Special Education Teachers/Special Needs Assistants:

Staff members can rotate between areas/classes but this will be minimized where possible. When rotation occurs, agreed sanitising routines will be observed. The school will balance the need for a

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practical and sensible level of caution with the need to provide a supportive environment for pupils/students and where teachers feel able to engage with pupils in a way that supports their learning. The above limits will be reviewed as required.

In keeping with our Special Education Policy, support will be provided by a blended approach of in-class support and withdrawal. The provision of support will be organised to ensure our support teachers will work as far as possible with a maximum of 2 classes (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.
- The tables and chairs in SET rooms will be wiped clean in between different pupils or small groups attending.

6.5 Corridors:

- ‘Keep a Safe Distance’ signage has been placed throughout the school corridors.

6.6 Additional Measures to Limit Interactions:

- Children will go straight to their classrooms from the yard with their class teacher on arrival, after Break, after lunch and at home time. They will also go directly to their pod area within the classroom, each morning.
- Each class teacher will also bring their class bubble to the exit point each evening.
- While we will all be delighted to see each other again, hand shaking and hugging will not be allowed.

6.7 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.

6.8 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.
- School play areas/zones attached here:

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Play Areas for all classes

Monday.	J.I. & S.I. Front Yard.	1 st and 2 nd Class. Outdoor Astro1.	3 rd and 4 th Class. Astro 3	5 th and 6 th Class. Outdoor Astro2.
Tuesday.	J.I. & S.I. Outdoor Astro1.	1 st and 2 nd Class. Front Yard.	3 rd and 4 th Class. Outdoor Astro2.	5 th and 6 th Class. Astro 3.
Wednesday.	J.I. & S.I. Front Yard.	1 st and 2 nd Class. Outdoor Astro1.	3 rd and 4 th Class. Astro 3.	5 th and 6 th Class. Outdoor Astro2.
Thursday.	J.I. & S.I. Outdoor Astro1.	1 st and 2 nd Class. Front Yard.	3 rd and 4 th Class. Outdoor Astro2.	5 th and 6 th Class. Astro 3.
Friday.	J.I. & S.I. Front Yard.	1 st and 2 nd Class. Outdoor Astro1.	3 rd and 4 th Class. Astro 3.	5 th and 6 th Class. Outdoor Astro2.

6.9 Books and copies:

- 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.

6.10 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.

6.11 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.

6.12 Labelling:

All lunch boxes, tracksuits, uniforms and coats etc should be clearly labelled.

6.13 Ventilation:

- The Department has published guidance setting out the practical steps for good ventilation in accordance with public health advice 'Practical Steps for the Deployment of Good Ventilation Practices in Schools'. The Guidance sets out an overall approach for schools that windows should be open as fully as possible when classrooms are not in use (eg during break-times or lunch-times and also at the end of each school day and partially open when classrooms are in use.

6.14 CO2 Monitors:

- The Department of Education has funded the provision of a number of portable CO2 monitors for schools to use if they wish. The use of CO2 monitors can provide a useful general indication that areas/rooms within a building may not be adequately ventilated and can enable occupants to become familiar with the impact that activities, outdoor weather and window openings have on levels of good ventilation within a room. This information can be used to inform strategies for improving ventilation.

6.15 Signage:

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

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- Toonagh NS Covid-19 Protocols displayed on signage has been erected at the main entry and exit of the school and smaller versions of this signage is on display in each entry and exit door.
- Social distancing signs are on the main corridors.
- Child friendly signage displaying Covid-19 Safety Steps erected in all classrooms.

6.16 Face Masks:

- According to Department advice, primary school children will not be required to wear face masks under any circumstances.
- Where a 2m distance from pupils or from other staff cannot be maintained staff will be wearing a face mask.
- All visitors/parents to our school yard or building must wear a face mask.

6.17 School office and 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 mask.
- 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 toonagschool@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 minimise the amount of cash that needs to be handled.

6.18 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.

6.19 Photocopying:

- Any staff member who uses the photocopier must clean it down after use with the wipes provided.

6.20 ICT:

- Devices will be cleaned after use and before they are returned for charging.

6.21 Visiting teachers and coaches:

- The possibility of facilitating extra-curricular activities will be examined on a case by case basis. At present only visiting coaches/teachers working outside are permitted and children from different classes cannot mix. Extra-curricular activities after school will not take place at present and we certainly hope to provide them in the future depending on the guidelines.

6.22 Substitute Teachers and SNAs:

- The sequence for covering all teacher absences will be in accordance with DES circular 0045/2020. A copy of the Covid-19 Response Plan will be provided to each substitute teacher/SNA. Substitutes will be required to complete a Return to the Workplace form before they enter a classroom and will be asked to confirm that they have engaged in the online induction training.

6.23 Physical Education and P.E. Equipment:

- Physical Education lessons will take place outside when the weather allows. Teachers will organise lessons that require very little if any equipment. Staff members and pupils will be encouraged to take additional breaks outside during the school day. While these breaks are taking place all windows in the classroom should be opened to allow for ventilation. All PE equipment if used must be sanitised after use.

6.24 Toilets during break:

- Teachers will ensure the pupils go to the toilet before break time and before they go out onto the yard.

6.25 Staffroom/Staff meeting:

- All staff members must maintain a physical distance of 2 metres when they are not engaged in teaching e.g. when they are using the staff room and arriving to work.
- Staff meetings will be held in complying with social distancing guidelines.
- Staff members should avoid sharing utensils in the staffroom as far as possible. Each staff member will be provided with their own cup with their name on it.

6.26 Teaching and Learning:

- As a staff, we are very aware that the children's schooling has been significantly interrupted since March 12th 2020. 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.

6.27 Homework:

- 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.

6.28 Other Parental Responsibilities:

The support and assistance of parents is key to the safe reopening of our school. We would ask that parents:

- Complete the Return to Educational Facility Parental Declaration Form before their child returns to school. This form can be completed online or by paper. Please see Appendix 5.
- Wear a mask when on the school grounds
- Wear a mask and follow social distancing when collecting or dropping off your child(ren)
- Encourage your child to follow the school's COVID Control Measures
- Ensure that your child's property is clearly labelled (lunch boxes, drink bottles, clothes, pencils etc)
- Parents must ensure that all of the child's equipment/books/copies are labelled with the child's name as equipment/books cannot and will not be shared.
- Parents are to ensure that their child knows and uses the protocols around coughing/sneezing/use of tissues/hand sanitisers prior to returning to school.

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- Water bottles are to be filled at home every morning.
- Lunches. Make sure your child can open /close their lunch box/drinks bottles. Regarding food please make sure they can open or peel any food that you send in. Please pay particular attention to yogurt cartons, oranges, drinks that needs straws etc. Teachers will not be able to assist anymore in any of these activities. As we will not be in a position to refill water bottles please ensure your child has enough drinks for the day.

6.29 Supporting the Learning of Children who Cannot Attend School:

- If a child is not able to attend school for an extended period of time, the class teacher (and/or the Special Education Teacher, where relevant) will provide work to support the child's learning at home and this will be shared with parents/guardians.

6.30 Wellbeing of the school community:

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

Our usual practice is to provide support to pupils based on what is known as the Continuum of Support. This is a tiered system that provides Whole School and Classroom Support for all pupils, additional School Support for some pupils, and School Support plus extra targeted intervention for a few pupils with complex needs.

6.31 The use of PPE:

- Sanitiser dispensers have been installed throughout the school e.g. at each entrance, entrance to each classroom and support room, at the entrances to both offices and staffroom.
- Paper towel dispensers have been installed in each toilet area and pedal bins have also been placed in each toilet area.
- Emulsifying soap is available in all the toilets.
- Hand hygiene will be promoted and encouraged, and parents/guardians are asked to support the school in reinforcing this message.
- In accordance with the DES guidelines, the school will be thoroughly cleaned at least once per day. Particular attention will be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, handrails, chairs/arm rests, desks, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities.
- All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area. Under no circumstances should these cleaning materials be removed from the building. Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day.
- Waste will be collected regularly from offices and other areas within the school.
- Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.)
- All staff will be wearing a face mask as per Department guidelines.
- Any staff (Teachers and SNA's) involved in intimate care need to wear PPE.
- According to Department advice, primary school children will not be required to wear face masks under any circumstances.
- Staff will wear a face mask at all times
- The BOM provides medical grade masks in the EN16483 category to all SNAs and teachers in and those staff by necessity that need to be in close and continued proximity with pupils with intimate care needs.

6.32 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.

6.33 Staff and Return to Work Protocol:

A RTW form should be completed and returned to the school before returning to work. Staff will be requested to confirm (verbally or in writing) that the details in the pre-return to work form remain unchanged following subsequent periods of closure such as school holidays.

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.

- Staff are advised to self-isolate or restrict their movements at home if they display any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 and contact their family doctor to arrange a test.
- Staff are advised not to return to or attend school in the event of the following:
 - If they are identified by the HSE as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19
 - If they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus
 - If they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.
 - Staff will cooperate with any public health officials and the school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice in the event of a case or outbreak in the school;
 - Staff will undergo any COVID-19 testing that may be required in their school as part of mass or serial testing as advised by Public Health

7. Illness and dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19

- We love to see all of our children at school every day. However, under the current circumstances, parents/guardians must keep children at home if they display any Covid-19 Symptoms. <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/symptoms.html>
- Staff must not attend school if they display any symptoms.
- A designated isolation area has been created and is located in the prefab at the rear of the school. If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, the following procedure will be implemented:
 - The pupil will be accompanied to the isolation area. A distance of 2 meters will be maintained. The person accompanying the child must wear a face mask.
 - The Principal will have responsibility for ensuring that all aspects of the protocol to deal with suspected cases have been adhered to.
 - If a pupil has a suspected case, parents/guardians will be contacted immediately by telephone. To help us in this regard, parents are asked to make sure that their contact details are kept up to date at all times.
 - Staff members who are symptomatic should immediately inform the Principal/Deputy Principal and go to the isolation area.
 - A face mask will be provided to the staff member/child who is symptomatic.
 - The staff member or child who is symptomatic should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects.
 - If the staff member/child is well enough to go home, arrangements will be made for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible.

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- Anyone who is symptomatic is advised to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used to travel home.
- If the staff member/child is too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a Covid-19 suspect.
- The isolation area and work areas will be thoroughly cleaned in line with the guidelines.
- The HSE will inform any staff/parents who have come into close contact with a diagnosed case via the contact tracing process. The HSE will contact all relevant persons where a diagnosis of COVID-19 is made. The instructions of the HSE should be followed and staff and pupil confidentiality is essential at all times.
- It is important to remember that any of us can get sick or unwell, and if we do, we need understanding and support from those around us. It is essential that anyone who feels unwell makes that known to the Principal/Deputy Principal as soon as possible.
- The Department's updated V4 Response Plan recommends that school staff should download the HSE COVID-19 tracker app to assist Public Health for contact tracing purposes both in and out of the school setting.

7.1 Unwell pupils

- While all children will be welcome back to school, we would remind parents that pupils with COVID-19 symptoms as outlined in section 4 of this document, must be kept at home.
- 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.

8. Pupil and Staff Wellness

8.1 COVID-19 Related Absence Management:

COVID-19 related absences will be managed in line with DES circular 0049/2020, DES Information Note 0008/2020 and other agreed procedures with the Department of Education.

8.2 Pupil Wellness:

Increased emphasis will be placed in all classes on Wellbeing, SPHE, PE and outdoor activities.

8.3 Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme:

Support for school staff wellbeing will be provided by Department Support Services including the PDST and CSL, as well as by the HSE's Health Promotion Team.

An Occupational Health Strategy is in place as a supportive resource for staff in schools. The aim of the Occupational Health Strategy is to promote the health and wellbeing of employees in the workplace, with a strong focus on prevention.

The Occupational Health Strategy comprises the Employee Assistance Service and the Occupational Health Service. The Employee Assistance Service (EAS) is provided by Spectrum Life under the logo of 'Wellbeing Together: Folláinne Le Chéile'.

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A free-phone confidential helpline 1800 411 057 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and staff members are encouraged to make use of the service when the need arises.

9. Support for Parents for Return to School

- Video for parents of children in Junior Infants - https://youtu.be/UomH_vakjDI
- Video for parents of children Senior Infants – 2nd <https://youtu.be/4smnni5jpGI>
- Video for parents of children 3rd – 6th <https://youtu.be/sbJUC1BmfiQ>
- Help with Starting the Conversation <https://nipinthebud.org/information-films/tips-for-returning-to-school/>
- Tips for Returning to School <https://nipinthebud.org/information-films/tips-for-returning-to-school/>
- A Parent's Guide to Close Contacts <https://youtu.be/cKMPDRuhRQw>

Please Note: This plan is a working document and will be amended if the Board of Management feels it necessary in order to ensure the continued Health and Safety of all the school community.

Ratification:

This COVID-19 Response Plan was ratified by the Board of Management of Toonagh National School at its meeting on 24/08/20

Signed: Marie Slattery
(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Date: 24/08/20

Gearóid Roughan
(Principal)

Update and Review:

This COVID-19 Response Plan was updated and reviewed by the Board of Management of Toonagh National School on 26/02/21

Signed: Marie Slattery
(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Date: 26/02/21

Gearóid Roughan
(Principal)

Update and Review:

This COVID-19 Response Plan was updated and reviewed by the Board of Management of Toonagh National School on 25/08/21

Signed: Marie Slattery
(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Date: 25/08/21

Gearóid Roughan
(Principal)