

Return to School Plan

Toonagh National School



Guidelines for Parents

August 2021

1. Introduction:

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.

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 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.

2. 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.

3. 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** as it is not safe to do so. Our supervision will start at 9.05am each morning and doors will be open at approximately 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/appointment.
- Exceptions to this are the Junior Infant Parents for a settling in period and they are made aware of their procedures. **Parents entering the school yard or building must wear a face mask.**

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4. 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.*

5. 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.

6. 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 75 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 be present at 2.55pm.*

**For children attending Teach Spraoi afterschool we notify Teach Spraoi of our 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.

7. 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.

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.

9. 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.

We have a Healthy Eating Policy in the school and we ask that children bring healthy lunches to school. One small treat is permitted on Friday.

All leftovers/waste must be stored in each pupil's lunchbox and must be disposed of at home.

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. HSE return to school form:

Please complete the HSE Return to School form attached for your child. You may email it to toonaghschool@gmail.com or send it in with your child on Monday morning.

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 facemask.
- 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

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

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.

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. Labelling:

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

19. 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.

In 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.

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

21. Staff Return to Work Protocol:

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.

22. Unwell pupils:

While all children will be welcome back to school, we would remind parents that if children are sick, generally unwell or presenting with any Covid-19 symptoms they must not be sent to school. In order to prevent the spread of Covid-19 it is important to know and recognise the common symptoms.

They are:

1. High temperature 38 degrees Celsius or more
2. A new cough - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry
3. Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
4. Loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste

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Uncommon symptoms Include:

5. Sore throat
 6. Headache
 7. Vomiting or diarrhoea.
- 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.

23. Ventilation:

Proper ventilation of the school building is essential all year round. Windows will be fully open when classrooms are not in use (e.g. during break-times). Windows will be partially open when classrooms are in use. Please ensure that your child is dressed in warm layers under their uniform and tracksuit if required.

24. Visiting teachers/coaches and extra-curricular activity:

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.

25. 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/sbJUCIBmfiQ>
- 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>

*Thank you in advance for your co-operation and continued support.
We are really looking forward to welcoming the children back to school.
In the meantime, keep safe and see you on the 30th of August.*

Gearóid Roughan
Principal

Marie Slattery
Chairperson