



Knocknacarra Educate Together  
National School

# COVID-19 Response Plan for Return to School Premises

*This revised plan has been developed to support the safe reopening of the school building in line with current advice from the Department of Education and Skills and the Health Service Executive (HSE).*

# COVID Response Plan – Knocknacarra ETNS - 2021

## Introductory Statement

This plan was drafted by the Board of Management in consultation with staff members and parents using the following templates and resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills, the Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN) and the HSE including the following sources:

- <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/e1141-covid-19-response-plan-for-the-safe-and-sustainable-operation-of-primary-and-special-schools/>
- <https://www.ippn.ie/index.php/back-to-school/covid-ar-scoil-2021-2022>
- <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>

This plan is subject to change and will be reviewed on a regular basis and particularly in line of any changes in advice from the HSE and other public health authorities.

## Underlying Principles

- The school has a responsibility to make an effort to ensure the safety, health and well-being of all members of our school community – children, parents and staff. This plan has been formulated to better ensure that the school can exercise that duty of care.
- Assuming it is in keeping with public health advice and guidelines issued by the Department of Education and Skills, it is preferable for all children to return to school for all five days of the school week and for a full school day. This plan has been formulated to achieve that aim.
- It is not possible to eliminate the risk of infection. However, with the co-operation of all members of our school community, it is possible to minimise the risk of the virus being introduced to school and the consequent risk of its spread.
- As well as co-operation, the flexibility and goodwill of all will be required to ensure the plan can be implemented.
- Regarding the Covid-19 virus, updated information about risk factors, including details of very high risk and high risk criteria, can be found at <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/people-at-higher-risk.html>.
- Common symptoms of the COVID-19 virus are:
  - A fever (high temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or above)
  - A new cough (this can be any kind of cough, not just a dry cough)
  - Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
  - Loss or change to your sense of smell or taste (you cannot smell or taste anything or things smell or taste differently than normal)
  - Fatigue
  - Aches and pains
- Other uncommon symptoms include:
  - Sore throat
  - Headache
  - Runny or stuffy nose
  - Feeling sick or vomiting
  - Diarrhoea
- Infection with the virus that causes COVID-19 can cause illness, ranging from mild to severe, and, in some cases, can be fatal. It can take up to 14 days for symptoms to show. They can be similar to symptoms of cold and flu.
- This document is needed in order to mediate risk, set procedures for this risk mediation and provide ways to communicate and educate about these risk-mediation procedures.

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- The well-being of all members of the community is important. As usual, part of the teaching day in the context of the Learn Together curriculum will be focused on this. Equally, staff members are encouraged to seek support as required from colleagues as well as the Employee Assistance Service provided by Inspire Workplace Services.

### Assumptions

- Each class will constitute a bubble.
- The daily schedule will remain intact, with a drop-off window of 8.40 to 8.50. The day will include one 10-minute and one 30-minute break, which will be staggered.
- Within each class, the children will be further divided into pods, with a minimum distance of 1 metre being maintained between pods and within pods when possible. While these pods will be kept intact as much as possible for a term, teachers may adjust them to support the learning process.
- Hand sanitiser will be available at all entry/exit points and in all classrooms and support rooms. Regular hand washing throughout the day will also be facilitated.
- Good classroom ventilation practices will continue to be implemented in line with recommendations from public health and the Department of Education.

### Lead Worker

The Lead Worker Representative (LWR) will work in collaboration with the employer to assist in the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of COVID -19 and monitor adherence to those measures and to be involved in communicating the health advice around COVID-19 in the workplace. Áine Ní Chuinneagáin is the Lead Worker Representative. In her absence, Vivienne Kelly is the Deputy Lead Worker Representative.

Responsibility for the development, updating and implementation of the COVID-19 Response Plan and the associated control measures lies primarily with the Board of Management and school management.

Strong communication and a shared collaborative approach is key to protecting against the spread of COVID-19 in schools, and looking after the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and pupils. Adherence to the Work Safely Protocol will only be achieved if everyone has a shared responsibility in implementing the measures contained within the Protocol in their place of work.

If a staff member has any concerns or observations in relation to the COVID-19 Response Plan, control measures or the adherence to such measures by staff, pupils or others he/she should contact the lead worker(s) who will engage with the principal/BOM.

The role of the LWR is to:

- Represent all staff in the workplace regardless of role, and be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of different staff cohorts;
- Work collaboratively with school management to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19;
- Keep up to date with the latest COVID-19 public health advice;
- In conjunction with school management, promote good hygiene practices such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette along with maintaining social distancing in accordance with public health advice;

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- Assist school management with implementing infection prevention control measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace in line with the Work Safely Protocol and current public health advice;
- In conjunction with school management, monitor adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19;
- Conduct regular reviews of safety measures;
- Report any issues of concern immediately to school management and keep records of such issues and actions taken to rectify them;
- Consult with the school management on the school's COVID-19 Response Plan in the event of someone developing COVID-19 while in school including the location of an isolation area and a safe route to that area;
- Following any incident, assess with the school management any follow up action that is required;
- Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace; and
- Make representations to school management on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.

All staff, pupils, parents, contractors and visitors have a responsibility both as individuals and collectively to have due regard for their own health and safety and that of others and to assist with the implementation of the COVID-19 Response Plan and associated infection prevention control measures.

### **Staff**

- All staff members must complete the Return to Work Questionnaire before returning to the school after an absence or holiday period.
- All staff members will receive this document and sign it. This will follow training in the necessary protocols.
- The same practice will apply to substitute teachers who will need to complete and sign a Return to Work form.
- Staff will maintain 2m physical distancing from each other at all times. Face coverings will be worn by all adults in the school when indoors and particularly when physical distancing cannot be maintained.

### **Infection Prevention Control Measures: Children and Staff Who Should Not Attend School**

Staff and pupils must 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.

If a child or staff member is in one of the following categories, they should not attend school –

- Staff and children who are generally unwell or presenting with any of the recognised symptoms. This means that if a child has a temperature upon waking, a persistent cough or any other signs of illness they cannot attend school under any circumstance. Parents and staff members are encouraged to seek GP advice. If children or staff are present with any illness or symptoms at school, they will be sent home.
- Staff and children who live with someone who has symptoms of the virus.
- Staff and children who display any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 and a family doctor has been asked to arrange a test, as such individuals must self-isolate or restrict their movement at home.

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- Staff and 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.
- Staff and children identified by the HSE as a close contact, particularly in their household, of a confirmed case of COVID-19, following HSE advice on when they may return.
- Staff and children who have travelled outside of Ireland, where in such instances children and staff must follow the latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.
- Staff and children who have been diagnosed with Covid-19 until GP advises that they can return to school.
- Staff and children who have been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with Covid-19 until a negative test result has been received and the child's GP or the HSE certifies he or she can return to school.
- Staff and children who have a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending. They may return to school when the HSE confirms they are able to return to school.
- Staff and children with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school.

Parents will be required to complete an online form via Aladdin confirming these conditions before children can return to the school building. This will be repeated after long breaks.

### Entrances & Exits

- Appropriate signage will be put up at entrances, particularly the main entrance of the school that will be used to receive visitors and parents by appointment.
- Anyone coming to the school will access the school through the pedestrian gates only. Everyone will enter through the left pedestrian gate, when facing the school, and exit through the other pedestrian gate. These will be marked clearly with signage.
- All children will access their classrooms using the external doors in each classroom. They will also exit using these doors at all times. Children and their parents are asked to line up outside the appropriate classroom, maintaining physical distance.
- The internal corridors will be used only to walk to the hall and the learning support classrooms. This will be done in a clockwise direction at all times.

### Arrival at School

- Children should arrive at school at 8.40 to enter their classrooms no later than 9.00. Supervision will be provided in each classroom. After 9 am, the doors will be closed and all late arrivals must visit the office first.
- There must be no congregating by parents or caregivers on school grounds before or after school.
- We request that only one adult bring a child to the school. Adults dropping off children are asked to wear a face covering.
- Everyone will access the school through the pedestrian gates and following the signage indicating entry and exit.
- No adults, other than staff members, should enter the building without an appointment. A face covering must be worn. A log will be kept of any visitors, including parents, who enter the school building for contact-tracing purposes.
- Messages for teachers can be sent by email or by phoning the school office.
- Hand-sanitiser stations are installed at each entrance and in the support room and staff room, and everyone is required to use hand-sanitiser or wash hands with soap and water when entering the building.
- Children in 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class should put on a face covering before entering the building in the morning.

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## **End of School Day**

- Adults, who are collecting their children from school at the end of the day, should line up maintaining physical distance starting at 13.30 or 14.30 outside their children's classroom. Children will wait at their place until a parent/guardian arrives. Adults dropping off children are asked to wear a face covering. There must be no congregation of parents and children on school grounds at any time.
- Children who are walking or cycling independently will be dismissed first.
- Afterschool @ KETNS will operate by organising the attendees in pods that are based on their class groupings. They will use the pre-fab, additional classroom, halla and yard only.
- The prefab may be used for small-group teaching until 13.00. If the area is used, the support teacher will need to clean surfaces before the next group including tables, chairs and high-touch surfaces such as door handles. Children will bring their own stationery supplies from their classrooms.
- The children for any afterschool programmes will remain in the classroom until they are collected at 13:35 and 14:35. Children will not be allowed to return to their classrooms after this.
- Any child not yet collected at this point will be brought by the supervising teacher to the main door. Unless the weather is severe, they will wait at the front door outside until they are collected, maintaining physical distance, particularly between children of different class groupings.

## **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 rather than going to the child's classroom directly, he/she should either phone the office or knock on the front door to alert the office that they have arrived. Adults dropping off or collecting children are asked to wear a face covering.
- 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 out the child.
- No adult should enter the school building unless invited to do so.

## **Fire Drills and Emergency Evacuation Procedures**

- The assembly point for fire drills or other evacuations will remain the same. Students will walk with appropriate physical distance out classroom doors and then towards to the staircase to reach the assembly point on the pitch. Classes will remain 2m apart from each other in their lines.

## **Classroom Arrangements to Decrease Interaction**

- Infant classrooms will be organised in pods of a maximum of six children. Each pod will be a minimum of 1m from other pods. While pods will remain intact as much as possible for a full term, children may be relocated by teachers for justifiable reasons to promote social cohesion or to support learning.
- Classrooms for 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> classes will be set up with 1m distance between all pupils, with desks spaced apart and clear traffic-flow patterns. Children will be organised in pods for discussion and interactive activities, though a 1m distance will be maintained, particularly in 3<sup>rd</sup> class and up. Children will sit at the ends of the tables or on the long sides diagonally from each other. Materials, other than personal stationery and books, may be shared between pupils at the same table or in the same pod, if required.

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- It is important that some level of interaction remains present to support good teaching. While physical distancing will be in place, opportunities for conversation and dialogue-based methodologies will be supported as much as possible.
- Social physical contact (hand-to-hand greetings, hugs) is discouraged among children. Adults in the school may not use hand-to-hand greetings or hugs, though they may need comfort a child as long as PPE equipment is worn correctly.

### Ventilation and Air Quality

- Windows and doors will be opened on a regular basis when the weather is sufficiently warm to increase airflow. Windows should be partially open whenever possible and always at break times and whenever the classroom is not occupied. At the end of the day the windows should be opened for at least 15 minutes after the classroom is not occupied, usually by the cleaners.
- Each room has an air purifier that should be operating at all times, even when people are not present, from the start of the morning until the end of the school day. They will be monitored and serviced as required. Changing and cleaning of filters will be done carefully with full PPE and no children present. The larger devices present in classrooms have air-quality meters which will be monitored.
- Finding new opportunities for outdoor learning will be pursued, when practical. In addition to yard breaks, regular movement breaks, including walking/running in the yard and around the school, will continue, with classes maintaining physical distance and walking/running quietly so as not to disturb other classes.

### Hand Hygiene

- Hand hygiene will be important at all times. This will be addressed with a combination of hand washing with soap and water and use of hand sanitiser.
- Pupils and staff should perform hand hygiene:
  - On arrival at school,
  - Before eating or drinking,
  - After using the toilet,
  - After playing outdoors,
  - When their hands are physically dirty and
  - When they cough or sneeze.
- Upon arriving at school, everyone must use hand sanitiser or wash their hands with soap and water. Hands will be washed using soap and water before and after eating, after using the toilet and if hands become soiled at any time as hand sanitiser does not work on dirty hands.
- Children will be encouraged to wash hands for 20 seconds. Hot water, regulated to prevent scalding, is available for children and staff. Compostable paper towels are provided, and a bin with a foot pedal will be used for disposal of the paper towels.
- Specific lessons on hand hygiene will be taught to all classes during the first week back in the school on a daily basis and then reviewed regularly.
- In other cases, hand sanitiser may be used, particular when entering the classroom. Touchless hand-sanitiser dispensers are present at all entrances, in the staff room, support room, the hall and the pre-fab. Alcohol-based sanitiser must not be stored or used near heat or naked flame.

### PPE

PPE will be worn by staff in most indoor situations and particularly whenever 2m distance cannot be maintained. This is particularly true for staff who are attending to personal care needs or who are administering first aid as they will wear appropriate PPE including gloves and face coverings. Teachers

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may opt to wear a visor on a regular basis as well as a cloth face covering when 2m cannot be maintained, noting that current expert opinion and international guidance generally favours face coverings and acknowledges that visors do not provide the same protection as cloth face coverings. (See [current evidence on the use of face coverings.pdf \(hpsc.ie\)](#).) Visors will be provided by the Board, and teachers themselves are responsible for cleaning them. Staff members may choose to wear reusable cloth masks and reimbursement, vouched with a receipt, will continue to be given to staff towards the purchase of reusable face coverings, up to the value of €50 each academic year. In addition, the school will provide medical/surgical grade face coverings for all staff members who wish to use them, particularly for SNAs, special education teachers and anyone with a necessity to be in close and continued proximity to pupils with intimate care needs. Staff members will receive training on PPE safe usage. Wearing a face covering or mask does not negate the need to stay at home if symptomatic.

All adults will wear face coverings when 2m distance cannot be maintained indoors. This includes parents and any other visitors attending meetings by appointment.

Plastic aprons and gloves will be worn for cleaning purposes that involve body fluids or when cleaning after a suspected case of COVID-19. Reusable gloves and aprons have also been provided to the staff for regular cleaning.

In accordance with the directives of the Department of Education, children in 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Class are required to wear a face covering while at school unless they are exempted, as described below. Children in other classes are welcome to wear a face covering if they wish. Parents are asked to provide either a reusable cloth face covering or disposable one which covers both the mouth and nose. It is essential that reusable face coverings are washed daily and disposable ones are replaced. Face coverings should be replaced if they are wet. The school will have additional face coverings for the rare occasion that they are forgotten or require replacement. The school will provide a labelled plastic bag for storing the face covering when it is not being worn. Wearing a face mask does not negate the need to stay at home if symptomatic.

Masks will be worn except under the following circumstances:

- During eating times (the face covering will be stored properly and windows and doors will be opened to increase ventilation).
- During yard times (though children are welcome to wear them if they wish).
- During physical education lessons (with additional efforts to increase ventilation).
- Outdoor activities (but physical distancing will continue to be encouraged).
- Drinking water (throughout the day face coverings can be briefly removed to allow for drinking water and then put back on again).

The Department of Education has made the following recommendations regarding any exemptions from the requirement to wear a face covering:

- any pupil with difficulty breathing or other relevant medical conditions
- any pupil who is unable to remove the cloth face-covering or visor without assistance
- any pupil who has special needs and who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the cloth face covering or visor, for example pupils with intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, sensory concerns or tactile sensitivity.

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The school may be best placed to identify those children whose complex needs are such that the wearing of face covering may not be possible for them and will discuss this with parents as required.

It has been widely accepted by the school community during the course of the global pandemic, that public health measures are put in place to protect the health and safety of the school community as a whole, that they are consistent with national health policy put in place by Government and that they should be followed. Parents are encouraged to work with the school in a spirit of partnership and co-operation to ensure the safety of the whole school community. The school will work closely with parents of those children not wearing a face covering to address concerns. The Department will engage with schools to offer guidance and support to reassure parents and to help schools resolve any issues. Where significant issues have not been resolved locally, the school will make contact with the Department's COVID-19 support line.

Discrete lessons on the proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings will be provided. All teachers and staff should be aware that they should wash or sanitize hands (using a hand sanitizer) before and after helping a student put on or adjust a face mask.

### **Personal Equipment**

- For children in Junior Infants to 2<sup>nd</sup> Class, the school provides a pouch (used for homework) and a plastic box (used for schoolwork) which will hold each child's pencils, crayons, etc. and which will be labelled with their names. Supplies will be labelled with children's names and provided by the school.
- Children from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Class have a plastic pouch for homework provided by the school. They will also have a plastic box for all supplies used at school. Supplies will be labelled with children's names and provided by the school. Children can use their personal pencil case for homework.
- Schoolbooks are labelled and assigned to individual children. They are stored, along with personal equipment, in under-desk baskets or in school bags. If books are not stored there or not assigned to specific children, they will be set aside for 72 hours before they can be redistributed. This applies to the Oxford reading books used for homework as well, which will be set aside when they are returned and not sent out again until the book quarantine period has passed.
- Coats are normally put on the backs of chairs or in the school bag or may be hung on a designated hook.

### **Shared Equipment**

By necessity, some classroom equipment needs to be shared including tablets, laptops and calculators. Cleaning of such shared equipment with wipes or other cleaning products will take place after each use to minimise the risk of the spread of infection.

The equipment used for structured activities and play in Infant classrooms will be used in pods and cleaned or not used for 72 hours before they are used by the next pod. This will allow Aistear and structured play to continue. The various equipment will remain with the group for the week. It will be cleaned and set aside for the weekend before being passed to the next group. Therefore, Aistear will still have five activities, but they will rotate on a weekly rather than daily basis. Traditional choice time where children choose different equipment to play with will not be possible at this time.

For maths equipment, this will be given to students in groups or pods. Additional equipment will be purchased so that equipment does not need to be shared between classes. Sports equipment that

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requires being touched will be cleaned after use and stored appropriately. Balls and other yard equipment will be given to each class for their use only during break times.

### Learning Support

In keeping with our Special Education policy, learning support will be provided by a blended approach of in-class support and withdrawal. Support teachers will work with specific classrooms.

- 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 from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Class receive support in one of the SET rooms, social distancing of 1 metre will be maintained between each child in the group.
- The tables and chairs in SET rooms will be wiped clean in between different groups attending.
- Children will not be combined for learning support from different classes.
- SNAs will be assigned to as small a number of classrooms as possible given the school's allocation, requiring some SNAs to work in more than one classroom.

### Regular Cleaning

- The following cleaning schedule will be followed:

Item(s)/Area(s) to be Cleaned	Frequency	Cleaning Materials Used	Equipment Used	Person Responsible
Toilets	Daily and as required	Household disinfectant (basins) Bleach (toilets) Floor cleaner (floors)	Disposable paper towels Toilet brushes Mop	Cleaner, other staff (as required)
Tables and chairs (classrooms)	Daily	Household disinfectant	Cloth towels (changed daily) or disposable paper towels	Teachers, SNAs and pupils; cleaner each afternoon
Floors (classrooms)	Daily (swept by staff; mopped and hoovered by cleaner) and as required; monthly (buffed)	Floor cleaner	Mop/hoover/buffer	Teachers, SNAs and pupils; cleaner
Frequently-touched surfaces (door handles, taps, light switches, etc.)	Daily (cleaner); whenever a class cohort changes in a support-teaching area (support teachers); front door and office each morning and afternoon at a minimum (secretary); staff room at the end of each break (all staff)	Household disinfectant and bleach (on sinks, taps, toilet handles, etc.)	Cloth towels (changed daily) or disposable paper towels	Cleaner, support teachers, secretary and other staff members, as required
Floors (hall and corridor)	Daily (hall after meals by afterschool); Weekly (hoovering and mopping by cleaner);	Floor cleaner	Mop/hoover/buffer	Afterschool staff; cleaner

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	monthly (corridors buffed)			
Kitchen and staff room	Daily (after each break by staff and after meal preparation by afterschool staff; floor mopped by cleaner); staff wipes down own table after lunch and cleans dishes	Household disinfectant	Cloth towels (changed regularly) or disposable paper towels, dishwasher	Staff, afterschool staff; cleaner
Shared toys	Weekly or before passing on to the next child	Household detergents	Dishwasher for larger items, sponge and cloth towel, set aside for 72 hours if they can't be cleaned	Teachers
Books	After returned for use by others	Set aside for 72 hours and wiped down with warm, soapy water if they have plastic covers	Sponge and cloth towel	Teachers and SNAs
Shared electronic devices	When changing user	Special wipes	Special wipes	Children, staff
Bins	Emptied every day and surfaces cleaned	Household detergents	Paper towels	Staff and cleaner

- The cleaning schedule will be monitored to ensure that it is adequate and it is being followed.
- Cleaning staff will check on the availability of liquid soap, paper towels and sanitiser supplies each day and replenish when needed.
- Waste storage and collection will be monitored. Waste which is suspected of containing the virus must be stored separately for 72 hours before being put with other waste.

### Timetables

- There will be staggered yard times for all classes, with a maximum of three classes in the yard at any break.
- All children will go to the yard and return via the classroom doors, and they will walk in a clockwise direction around the school.
- If children require a toilet during break, they will use the toilets near the office. A maximum of two children will be allowed inside the school for the toilet at any one time. Younger children will be escorted to these toilets.
- The classes will remain separated during the yard time but will not be expected to maintain physical distance within their class group when outdoors, though close contact will be discouraged. A maximum of 3 classes will be in the yard at any one time with three clear zones.

10:35-10:45	J1	1 <sup>st</sup>	
10:50-11:00	S1	2 <sup>nd</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>
11:05-11:15	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>
11:55-12:20	J1	1 <sup>st</sup>	

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12:25-12:50	SI	2 <sup>nd</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>
12:55-13:20	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>

## Visitors

- The number of visitors, including parents, coming into the school will be kept at a minimum. All visitors entering the building must perform hand hygiene on entrance and must wear a face covering if they are able. All visitors must enter the school via the main office and sign in using the Contact Tracing Log. They must use hand sanitiser or wash their hands when entering the building.

## Meetings

- Meetings will be held using an online interface, normally Google Meets. This includes staff meetings, Board meetings and parent-teacher meetings. If it is agreed to have a face-to-face meeting, these will take place in a large room (usually the halla) with a minimum of 2m physical distancing between all participants. Face coverings will be worn for the duration of face-to-face meetings in an enclosed space such as the principal's office.

## Office

- Under normal circumstances, only the secretary will use the office. This means only the secretary will be able to use the copier, take payments as required from parents and answer the phone. When the secretary is not present, one staff member at a time may enter the office. It is recommended that the phone be cleaned before and after each use. Likewise, the copier may be used by other staff members, and again, it should be cleaned before and after each use.

## Staff Room

- The staff room will have a maximum of four staff members present at any one time and will maintain 2m physical distancing. Staff members must clean their own area before leaving the room. The area will be cleaned after each break, and staff members are responsible for cleaning up after themselves including putting used cups, cutlery and dishes in the dishwasher.

## Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19 of a Staff Member

Staff should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19, as described above in this document.

If a staff member or other adult working in the school presents with any of these symptoms, they must stay home, informing the principal and seeking the advice of a GP as soon as possible.

If a staff member or other adult displays symptoms at school, they should inform the principal as soon as possible and leave the school once supervision of pupils is arranged. A cleaning protocol as described in the subsequent section will be followed.

Staff members should not return to or attend school in the event of the following:

- 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 members must cooperate with any public health personnel and their school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice given in the event of a case or outbreak in their school. They also must undergo any COVID-19 testing that may be required in their school as part of mass or serial testing as advised by HSE Public Health Teams.

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Staff members are encouraged to download the HSE COVID-19 tracker app to assist Public Health for contact tracing purposes both in and out of the school setting.

## **Teacher Absence and Substitution**

In the event that teacher is unable to attend school, every effort will be made to secure a substitute teacher for the class. If a substitute teacher is not available, it is not appropriate for the class to be divided into groups and accommodated in other classes. In such circumstances, other staff members will be called upon to provide substitution including support teachers and the principal. In some circumstances, it may not be possible for the class to attend on that day. If that is the case, as much notice as possible will be given to parents. Priority for substitution cover will be given to the youngest classes.

## **Dealing with a Suspected Case of Covid-19 of a Child**

Pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19. While regular temperature checks will not be taken, staff may check a child's temperature as part of determining whether a child has symptoms. This will be done using a touchless thermometer.

If a pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while in the building, the following are the procedures will be implemented:

- The principal and/or secretary will be informed immediately if a child is presenting with symptoms.
- Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately.
- The child will be accompanied to the designated isolation area, the principal's office, via the internal corridors by a member of staff. If more than one child is presenting with symptoms, the hall will be used with enhanced physical distancing measures in place. 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 should 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 phone the child's GP.
- The child presenting with symptoms should be advised to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and to put the tissue in a waste bag provided.
- 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. Children will exit the principal's office via the corridor rather than any of the classrooms.
- If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact the HSE or in extreme emergencies call 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick child is a suspected Covid-19 case.
- Arrangements will be made for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved in line with DES and public health guidance.
  - Other children and staff not involved with cleaning will temporarily relocate to the hall.

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- Any area that may have the virus present should be first secured, then aired and closed for as long as is practical for cleaning as the amount of virus living on surfaces will have reduced significantly over time.
- Surfaces will be cleaned with normal household disinfectant after a suspected coronavirus (Covid-19) case. This will reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people.
- For cleaning purposes, a face mask, apron and disposable gloves will be worn. These should be double-bagged, then stored securely for 72 hours and finally put with the regular rubbish after cleaning.
- Using a disposable cloth, hard surfaces will be cleaned with warm soapy water. Then surfaces will be disinfected using ordinary cleaning products. Particular attention should be paid to frequently touched areas and surfaces such as toilets and door handles.
- If an area has been heavily contaminated, such as with visible bodily fluids, from a person with coronavirus (Covid-19), protection for the eyes, mouth and nose as well as gloves and an apron should be worn.
- Hands should be washed regularly with soap and water for 20 seconds and after removing gloves, aprons and other protection used while cleaning.
- Public areas where a symptomatic individual has passed through and spent minimal time, such as corridors, but which are not visibly contaminated with body fluids can be cleaned as normal.
- All surfaces that the symptomatic person has come into contact with must be cleaned and disinfected, including objects which are visibly contaminated with body fluids

### **Individuals Who Are Awaiting Test Results and Contact Tracing**

- A pupil or member of staff who is awaiting results of a Covid-19 test will not return to school until the HSE advise it is safe to return. Unless otherwise instructed by the HSE, all other children and teachers continue to attend until results come back. If a negative result is received, the child can return to school following GP advice or the recommendation of the HSE. Children should be symptom free for 48 hours.
- If a staff member is awaiting a test result, the HSE will advise what to do in this case regarding contact tracing and what procedures should be followed.
- 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. Confidentiality related to the identity of suspected or confirmed cases will be maintained. The advice and instructions of the HSE will be followed at all times.

### **Impact of a Confirmed Case of Covid-19 in a Class**

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

- The school will cooperate with the HSE related to contact tracing to notify any close contacts.
- Public health advice will be sought and followed.

### **Supporting the Learning of Children Who Cannot Attend School**

Children deemed to be at "very high risk" to COVID-19 based on medical grounds or advice from the HSE may be unable to attend school. They can remain enrolled in the school, and their ongoing learning will be supported. This will be achieved through regular contact via email from class teachers with the assistance of the principal and support teachers. Further information can be found in the document, "Returning to School – Curriculum Guidance for Primary School Leaders and Teachers", p. 25.

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If a child is not able to attend school for an extended period of time due to illness, the class teacher (and/or the learning support teacher, where relevant) will share suggested activities to support the child's learning at home with parents, recognising that the primary role of the teacher must remain the day-to-day teaching responsibilities in the classroom.

If a cohort or more than one cohort is asked not to attend on advice from the HSE, distance learning activities will begin and will be guided by a forthcoming Distance Learning Policy.

### **PE**

Where possible, PE should take place outdoors and use of equipment should be confined to the sets that have been distributed to class groupings. If the PE hall is being used by class groupings, common touch points should be cleaned at intervals throughout the school day. Teachers will develop a plan so that strands or activities are distributed between class groupings so that the need for sharing equipment between groups is minimised. After using any touch equipment, it will be sanitised or set aside for 72 hours, unless it is used again by the same pod.

### **Music**

Singing and wind instrument playing presents a risk, and mediation needs to be in place, with emphasis placed on other aspects of the music curriculum. Singing outdoors or with enhanced distancing of 2m in the hall is recommended. It is recognised that in the junior classes rhymes and short songs for teaching purposes are integral and may continue in classrooms, using good ventilation whenever possible by opening windows weather-permitting. Tin whistle playing is paused and not taking place at present. Other percussion instruments may be used following the guidance above regarding shared materials.

### **Assemblies**

At present, no assemblies will be taking place of any kind. Our ordinary Friday assemblies will continue to be virtual assemblies held live with each class present in their classrooms. Unfortunately, assemblies for parents must be postponed.

### **Breakfast Club**

The Breakfast Club is returning to the school with strict protocols. Children can arrive starting at 8:00. Unlike previous years, this will not be a drop-in service. Instead, parents will need to book a place using the school website at least 24 hours in advance.

Children will sit with only children from their class bubble. Tables will be set up in the hall with at least 2m distance between different class bubbles. Enhanced ventilation will be in place in the hall use the HEPA air filters and with windows open. Other than to go to the toilet, children will remain at the designated area for their class bubble for the duration of their time in Breakfast Club. At the end of the Breakfast Club children will be sent to classrooms, leaving the hall doors and walking clockwise around the school building. Children in infants, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> will be escorted by staff members to their rooms. Careful cleaning of the tables will take place before storing them for the next use.

### **Extra-curricular Clubs**

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Afterschool clubs will continue but must respect maintain children in class bubbles at all times. Afterschool @ KETNS remains open for all children, and measures are in place to ensure class bubbles are maintained. Adult leaders must follow the same protocols as the staff.

Paul Adams, chairperson

Date: 01/12/2021

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## **APPENDIX 1**

### **COVID-19 Policy Statement**

Knocknacarra Educate Together NS 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 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. 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(s), who will be supported in line with the agreement between the Department and education partners.

Signed: Paul Adams

Date: 01/12/2021

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## Appendix 2

### Return to Work Form

This form must be completed by staff in advance of returning to work.

If the answer is Yes to any of the below questions, you are advised to seek medical advice before returning to work.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Principal: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

	Questions	YES	NO
1.	Do you have symptoms of cough, fever, high temperature, difficulty breathing, loss or change in your sense of smell or taste now or in the past 14 days?		
2.	Have you been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection in the last 14 days?		
3	Are you awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test?		
4	In the past 14 days, have you been in contact with a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19?		
5	Have you been advised by a doctor to self-isolate at this time?		
6	Have you been advised to restrict your movements at this time?		
7	Have you been advised to cocoon at this time? Note: if you're at very high risk (extremely vulnerable) from COVID-19 you may be advised to cocoon.		

I confirm, to the best of my knowledge that I have no symptoms of COVID-19, am not self-isolating or awaiting results of a COVID-19 test and have not been advised to restrict my movements.

Please note: The school is collecting this sensitive personal data for the purposes of maintaining safety within the workplace in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The legal basis for collecting this data is based on vital public health interests and maintaining occupational health and this data will be held securely in line with our retention policy.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Appendix 3**

**Contact Tracing Log**

<b>Name of School</b>			<b>School Contact Person</b>	
<b>Address of School</b>			<b>For Queries only: Phone No</b>	
			<b>Email</b>	
<b>Name of Visitor</b>				Was the visit pre-arranged with the Principal? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Date of Visit</b>	___/___/___	<b>Time</b>	<b>Entry to school</b> _____ am <input type="checkbox"/> pm <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Exit from School</b> _____ am <input type="checkbox"/> pm <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Visitor Status</b>	Contractor <input type="checkbox"/>	Parent/Guardian <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/> Please complete: _____	
<b>Contact details of visitor</b>	Company Name <small>(if applicable)</small>			
	Address			
	Contact No.		Email Address	
	Reason for Visit			
<b>Who the visitor met (separate line required for each person the visitor met)</b>				
<b>Name of Person visited</b>				<b>Length of time spent with each person in the school</b>