



Kilcolgan Educate Together  
National School

# Plan for Return to School Premises

*This plan has been developed to support the safe reopening of the school building during the COVID 19 global pandemic and has been prepared in line with current advice from the Department of Education and Skills and the Health Service Executive (HSE).*

## VERSION HISTORY

V1.1. Prepared by Anna Eagleton and Kiran Sarma, August 2020

V1.2 Prepared by Anna Eagleton John Burke, February 2021

V1.3 Prepared by Anna Eagleton John Burke, August 2021

## 1.1 TITLE

Covid 19 Response Plan for Kilcolgan Educate Together NS

## 1.2 INTRODUCTION

This plan was drafted 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/664a8-supporting-the-safe-provision-of-schooling-2021/>
- <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/b264b-roadmap-for-the-full-return-to-school/>
- <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a0bff-reopening-our-primary-and-special-schools/>
- [https://issuu.com/ippn/docs/ippn\\_roadmap\\_formatted](https://issuu.com/ippn/docs/ippn_roadmap_formatted)
- <http://www.ippn.ie/index.php/back-to-school/back-to-school-updates>
- <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>
- <https://www.education.ie/en/Education-Staff/Services/Breaks-Leave/coronavirus-covid19/>

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

## 1.3 UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

- The school has a responsibility to make 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, persons currently deemed most at risk of complications if they catch the coronavirus are classified into two categories – ‘very high risk’ and ‘high risk’. Updated information about risk factors, including details of very high risk and high risk criteria, can be found at this link: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/covid19/people-at-higher-risk/overview/>
- The known effects of the coronavirus are a fever (high temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or above), a cough (this can be any kind of cough, not just a dry cough), shortness of breath or breathing difficulties, loss of sense of smell, loss of sense of taste or distortion of sense of taste and in extreme cases death.
- This document is needed in order to mitigate risk, set procedures for this risk-mitigation and provide ways to communicate and educate about these risk-mitigation procedures.

- The well-being of all members of the community is important. Staff members are encouraged to seek support as required from colleagues as well as the Employee Assistance Service provided by Spectrum.Life

#### 1.4 ASSUMPTIONS

- All children return to school and classes operate within a bubble system.
- Each class will constitute a bubble.
- The daily schedule will remain intact, with a drop-off window of 8.50 to 9.00. The day will include one 10-minute and one 30-minute break.
- Within each class, reasonable efforts will be made to avoid too much mixing of the children. Children from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class are seated with 1m distances between them.
- Hand sanitiser will be available at all entry/exit points and in all class and support rooms. Regular hand washing through the day will also be facilitated. Children are also asked to bring their own hand sanitiser.

#### 1.5 STAFF

- All staff members must complete the Return to Work Questionnaire at least 3 days before returning to the school. This will also apply after lengthy absences and after breaks.
- All staff members will receive this document and sign it. This will follow training in the necessary protocols.
- Substitute teachers will be asked to fill in the return to work questionnaire when they present for work in KETNS.
- Staff will aim to maintain 2m physical distancing from each other.
- Staff will wear face coverings at all times (with the exception of when eating or outdoors and appropriately distanced)

#### 1.6 CHILDREN AND STAFF WHO SHOULD NOT ATTEND SCHOOL

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

- 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 are encouraged to seek GP advice. If children present with any illness or symptoms at school, they will be sent home.
- Where children or family members have travelled abroad, government advice must be followed and these individuals must quarantine if necessary.
- Children who have been diagnosed with Covid-19 until GP advises that they can return to school.
- 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 certifies he or she can return to school.
- Children who have a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending. They may return to school when a GP certifies they are able to return to school.
- Children who have been in contact with a person who has a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending.
- Children with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school.

Parents will be required to complete a Return to School Form if their child is returning after an illness.

The same categories also apply to all staff members who must not come to the school building if they fit in any of the above categories with the exception of those who have been vaccinated and may be a close contact – see <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/covid19/contact-tracing/close-contact/>

### 1.7 ENTRANCES & EXITS

- Anyone coming to the school will access the school through the pedestrian gates only.
- 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, maintaining physical distance.
- Parents are asked to wear a mask at collection time.
- Children going on buses will use the side gate. Children who are brought to school and collected are to use the main gate.

### 1.8 ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL

- Children should arrive at school at 8.50 to enter their classrooms no later than 9.00. Supervision will be provided in each classroom.
- We ask that parents avoid congregating on or near school grounds before or after school.
- No adults, other than staff members, should enter the building without an appointment. 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.

### 1.9 END OF SCHOOL DAY

- Children who travel by bus will be dismissed first. Adults are asked to wait until all bus lines have exited via the side gate before entering the school grounds. This will be indicated by the large gate being opened.
- Adults, who are collecting their children from school at the end of the day, should line up maintaining physical distance starting at 13.40 or 14.40 outside their children's classroom. Children will wait at their place until a parent/guardian arrives. Parents are asked to wear face coverings for drop-off and collection.

### 1.10 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 office window to alert the office that they have arrived.
- The child will be brought from their class to the adult by a member of staff.
- No adult should enter the school building unless invited to do so.

### 1.11 FIRE DRILLS AND EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

- Fire drill lines have been spaced out so that children can line up with adequate distance between lines.

### 1.12 CLASSROOM ARRANGEMENTS TO DECREASE INTERACTION

- Classrooms from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class are arranged for social distancing. Children will sit at the ends of the tables or on the long sides diagonally from each other.
- Children should ensure they have all of their own materials for the day (pencil, rulers etc)
- 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 comfort a child as long as PPE equipment is worn correctly.
- Windows will be opened on a regular basis when the weather is sufficiently warm to increase airflow. The school is also using air filters. 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.

### 1.13 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.
- Upon arriving at school, everyone must use hand sanitiser. KETNS has provided sanitiser stations at the entrance and exits to all classrooms. Caregivers have been asked to ensure children's hands are clean before leaving for school.
- Hands will be washed using soap and water before and after eating, after using the toilet and if hands become soiled at any time, including upon return from outside play. Sinks for handwashing, with warm running water and soap are available in all classrooms. Bins for paper towels are provided in each bathroom.
- Caregivers have been asked to speak with children about the importance of hand hygiene and this message will be reinforced in school.
- Children have the option of a hand stamp (Colop Protect Kids Stamp) being applied to their hand in the morning to encourage hand washing and correct technique.
- 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 weekly as required.

### 1.14 PPE

As stated in DES guidelines, face coverings are not recommended for children under the age of 13. Therefore, face coverings will not be required for pupils in the school except when students present with symptoms and are waiting to leave the school premises.

Staff will wear face coverings.

Visitors to the school (this includes parents and any other visitors attending meetings by appointment) must wear face coverings indoors and if 2m distance cannot be maintained (e.g. at home time)

Plastic aprons will be worn for cleaning purposes that involve body fluids or when cleaning after a suspected case of COVID-19.

#### 1.15 PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

Sharing of personal equipment will be discouraged and primary carers of children have been advised of this. Personal equipment will be labelled with children's names.

Schoolbooks will be labelled and assigned to individual children. They will be stored, along with personal equipment, on the desk or in school bags. If books are not stored there or not assigned to specific children, they will be set aside for 72 hours and the plastic covers cleaned before they can be redistributed.

#### 1.16 SHARED EQUIPMENT

Where it is necessary to share equipment (e.g. tablets, laptops etc.). 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.

Any equipment used for structured activities and play will be cleaned appropriately before they are used. This will allow structured play to continue.

#### 1.17 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 and children across various 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 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 one classroom as much as possible.

#### 1.18 CLEANING

Cleaning services have been contracted to an external service provider. All cleaning staff will undergo on-line training prepared by the DES in conjunction with HSA. A detailed cleaning schedule has been agreed with the cleaning company. The cleaning schedule will be monitored to ensure that they are adequate and are 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 double bagged and stored separately for 72 hours before being put with other waste.

#### 1.19 TIMETABLES AND BREAKS

Break times will not be staggered during the school day.

The school campus play areas have been divided into 8 separate zones, marked appropriately. Zones rotate each day. Children will be advised of their zone for each day and the importance of staying within their zone.

All children will go to the yard and return via the classroom doors.

If children require a toilet during break, they will use the toilet in their own classroom.

While classes will remain separated during the yard time, they will not be expected to maintain physical distance within their class group when outdoors, though close contact will be discouraged.

#### 1.20 VISITORS

The number of visitors, including parents, coming into the school will be managed carefully. Primary carers have been advised that they cannot access the campus during the school day without appointment and must sign-in for the purposes of maintaining a contact log. The exception is at collection time when they may enter the campus (but not buildings) to collect children. Parents have been advised they must maintain social distancing of 2m during collection times and are asked to wear masks when entering the school grounds.

All other visitors should make an appointment in advance and sign the contact log on arrival, located in the secretary's office. They must use hand sanitiser or wash their hands when entering the building.

#### 1.21 MEETINGS

Meetings will be held using an online platform. 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 maintaining a minimum of 2m physical distancing between all participants. Face coverings will be worn for the duration of face-to-face meetings that are required in an enclosed space such as the principal's office.

#### 1.22 SECRETARY'S OFFICE

Access to the secretary's office is restricted. 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. Staff should sanitise their hands before and after accessing the office.

### 1.23 STAFF ROOM AND BREAKS

The staff room is closed except for the preparation of food. Staff may access the room to prepare or collect food and return with it (in a sealed container) to their classroom. Staff may also access the photocopier. This should be wiped with sanitizing spray before and after use. No more than 3 staff are permitted in the staffroom at any one time. Where staff return to the classroom for breaks, they may be joined by no more than 4 other staff members, under the 2m social distancing rules and where all other public health guidance is followed.

### 1.24 STAFF MEMBER AS A SUSPECTED COVID-19 CASE

Staff should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19. The key symptoms that will be considered are:

- High temperature (38 degrees Celsius or above)
- A persistent cough of any kind
- Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- Loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste

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.

### 1.25 STAFF MEMBER COVER

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.

### 1.26 DEALING WITH A SUSPECTED CASE OF COVID-19 OF A CHILD

Pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19. The key symptoms that will be considered are:

- High temperature (38 degrees Celsius or above)
- A persistent cough of any kind
- Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- Loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste

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 procedures will be implemented:

- The child will be treated with compassion, and an air of calm will be maintained at all times.
- The child will be advised as to what is happening and will be reassured that this is just a precaution.
- 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 by a member of staff. If more than one child is presenting with symptoms, a second isolation room will be used. 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.
- The supervising teacher will also wear a medical grade face mask.
- 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 if necessary.
- 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 the 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.
- If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick child is a 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 outdoors.
  - 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 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.

### 1.27 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 GP certifies they are ready 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.

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.

### 1.28 IMPACT OF CONFIRMED CASE ON CLASS

If the school is notified that a person in your child's class is 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.

### 1.29 SUPPORTING VULNERABLE CHILDREN WHO CANNOT ATTEND CLASS

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.

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. See Distance Learning Policy.