

Doolin National School

Return to Work Safety
Protocols & Procedures August
2020

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Dear staff members,

The following document has been created to guide the safe and successful reopening of our school. The response from everyone to the current situation since March 12th has been brilliant and now working together we can ensure the safe return of everyone. The main aim for us all is to open up in a way that ensures you feel safe and comfortable in your work. There is no doubt great anxiety for all involved, but through a structured plan, common sense and everyone working together we can make this happen.

The information contained in this document is based on the documents published by the DES and available here. <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a0bff-reopening-our-primary-and-special-schools/>

I would strongly advise that you read through the COVID-19 Response Plan that has been produced and is used extensively in formulating our school specific plan.

The DES published in July a document on curriculum advice for primary school staff which you could please read through at your convenience prior to school opening.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a0bff-reopening-our-primary-and-special-schools/#additional-guidelines-and-procedures>

Teaching and learning will not be our priority starting back. Setting up routines, reacclimatising to the school environment and hopefully adjusting will be the focus for us all. Picking up from where we left off in March, informally assessing where the children are at will be a big part of the start back. The priorities will be the language, maths, SPHE, art and PE for the first month back at least to support the adjustment. Structured homework will be greatly reduced for at least the month of September (possibly reading and some researching if you choose) to support children to ease back in.

The DES has issued a revised Circular on teachers' and SNAs' leave of absence. Circular 0049/2020, "Coronavirus (COVID-19): Arrangements for Teachers and SNAs employed in recognised Primary and Post-Primary Schools". This circular sets out COVID-related arrangements in respect of:

Return to work in schools;

- Special leave for those with a COVID diagnosis or with medical advice to self-isolate;
- Overseas travel;
- "High risk" and "very high risk" school employees; and
- A range of related matters.

Make sure to get in touch with me if you have any queries regarding this.

The return to work questionnaire is Appendix 1 of this document. Please have it completed and returned to me by Monday 24th of August.

Please ensure that you read through the document below so that any questions or suggestions/amendments you may have can be applied. I am looking forward to getting everyone's thoughts on this.

Please be assured that your safety and health and that of all our pupils is the paramount.

Michelle

Doolin National School

COVID-19 Policy Statement

Doolin National School 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: _____

Date: _____

Planning and Preparing for Re-Opening

The following day to day practicalities are planned to be implemented in our school;

New Terms

Class Bubble - Each classroom in the school will now be its own independent group / bubble. Class bubbles will also be segregated at yard times.

Class Pods –The DES have made no requirement for social distancing up to 2nd class. As room sizes are not adequate and individual desks are not available for 1m social distancing we will need to operate class pods from 3rd to 6th. This is where pupils will sit in groups in classes that are at least 1m from other pods. Sample seating layouts available in the DES Response Plan Publication.

Morning and Afternoon Supervision

The morning routines will need to be adapted to allow the safe movement of children and out of the building.

- Teachers will be asked to be in their rooms from 9am to facilitate supervising the children filtering in.
- Supervision time will be accounted for through Croke Park allocation. After the first two weeks a morning supervision rota can be drafted.

This year **Croke Park time** will predominately, if not all, be used for supervision and other supports for the safe return to school. Allocating time in the morning and after school to clean your own area etc so that it remains a safe space for you.

Pupils Entering & Exiting the Building

Doors have been allocated to class groups and will be supervised in the morning and evening times to ensure social distancing is observed.

5/6th class: Enter & Exit through fire exit in classroom

Infants: Enter & Exit through side door facing carpark

1st – 4th Enter & Exit through front door.

We will have to stagger yard breaks until further notice to ensure that we can effectively ensure the safety of each class bubble and staff members. Breaks will now be for two twenty minute periods.

See yard duty rota attached.

Staggered first day rota attached.

Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)

(This section is direct from DES)

In order to return to the workplace, staff must complete a **Return to Work (School) [RTW(s)]** form, which is available electronically here: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/3161c-appendices-checklists-and-policies-that-schools-must-follow-covid-19-response-plan-for-safe-re-opening-of-primary-schools/#covid-19-policy-statement>

A RTW form should only be completed **at least 3 days** prior to any proposed date of return to the workplace.

On receipt of the completed form the Principal will provide: details of the **Induction Training** for completion by staff prior to the return to the workplace and details of any additional health and safety measures in place in the school to facilitate the staff member's return to the school facility.

**The DES will be having us all complete an online return to work course like we completed previously for Child Protection. When this has been issued I will forward it to you all.*

Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representative

Responsibility for the development and implementation of the Covid-19 Response Plan and the associated control measures lies primarily with the Board of Management and the School Leadership.

The Return to Work Safely protocol provides for an agreed procedure between management and staff to appoint a Lead Worker Representative to carry out a specific role.

I asked for volunteers from staff to act as Lead Workers (one from teaching staff and one from non-teaching staff)

The role of the worker representative) is to ensure that Covid-19 measures are adhered to in the workplace as follows

Work collaboratively with the employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health

and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19.

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. Assist with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace.

Monitor adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.

Make representations on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.

If a staff member has any concerns or observations in relation to the Covid-19 Response Plan and control measures or the adherence to such control measures by staff, parents/guardians, contractors or visitors, he/she should contact the lead worker(s) who will engage with the Principal/BOM.

Lead worker representative: Michelle Moroney & Steve Donnellan

PPE & Hygiene

The DES have issued a number of grants in recent week to support schools to ensure the safe return of everyone involved.

The following measure will be put into place;

- Contact log maintained
- A 2m area will be marked off around every teacher's desk area to ensure that you have your own personal space in your room. SET area will differ but this will be discussed with those involved before returning.
- Every teacher will be issued with a face shield and face masks. *The DES have now stated that teachers who are unable to maintain two metres social distancing in their classrooms are advised to wear face masks or visors as appropriate*
- Every class room will have anti-bacterial spays and wipes available
- Gloves and aprons will be readily available to you
- Every teachers desk will have hand sanitiser
- Every classroom room has a hand sanitiser unit installed for the children to use
- Soaps dispensers are in toilets for the children and there will be a hand one at the classroom sink area
- There will be signage displayed throughout the school and in classrooms.
- Social distancing floor spacers will be in corridors and outside
- All doors will be secured open for the entirety of the school day to prevent constant use of handle and touching of the surface area
- No children should be sent around the school for jobs or to the office during the school day
- Every room in the school will be cleaned and wiped down each day by cleaning staff. The cleaner will close over the door when finished that evening. The teacher will be the first person to open it the next morning and pin it open. (I would advise you to ensure you wipe your own personal area too each day). Cleaning staff will have specific training before starting back to work. They will have a daily checklist of duties to complete ensuring all school areas are looked after.
- The school office is to remain for staff only.

Pupils & Resources

Following recommendations children where possible will use their own resources and books. Hopefully they will have all their own 'wipe able' items. Staff will want to set up class routines to ensure that this is the case. We will issue each class a number of Ipads that they can have in the room for the duration of restrictions.

Novels etc can be used but not shared and allow a week between sets going to the next class. In junior class resources that can be wiped can be shared and the DES are hoping Aistear etc can continue.

Frequency of Hand Hygiene

Pupils 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;
- When they cough or sneeze.

We hopefully will have a PE equipment box for each class to be used at break time. This will need to be sanitised after being used.

Communication & Parents

As mentioned above our school building will be for staff only other than extreme circumstances. We do however need to keep clear lines of communication open. We will be using email in all classes so that parents can send a message if needed so that a meeting may not be necessary. If a message will not suffice a phone call if necessary.

Parents will be asked not to come into the school grounds where possible.

Early collection - this will only be facilitated by prior knowledge via email from parents. Parents will need to notify the class teacher the day before if the child is to leave early for an appointment.

A similar document to this, in less detail, will be issued to parents next week following Board approval. I will forward a copy of parent document to all staff.

Now for what the DES ask of staff:

Staff have a statutory obligation to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of their colleagues and other parties. In order to facilitate a safe return to work, these duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Adhere to the School Covid-19 Response Plan and the control measures outlined
- Coordinate and work with their colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained
- Make themselves aware of the symptoms of Covid-19 and monitor their own wellbeing
- Self-isolate and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any symptoms of Covid-19

- Not return or attend school if they have symptoms of Covid-19 under any circumstances.
- If they develop any symptoms of Covid-19 whilst within the school facility, they should adhere to the procedure outlined above
- Complete the RTW form before they return to work
- Must inform the Principal if there are any other circumstances relating to Covid-19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to facilitate their safe return to the workplace
- Must complete Covid-19 Induction Training and any other training required prior to their return to school Must be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices
- Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.

Covid related absence management

The management of a Covid-19 related absence will be managed in line with agreed procedures with DES.

Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

The Board of Management aims to protect and support the health and wellbeing of all staff (physical, mental, spiritual etc.) both at work, whether in the school facility or at home and outside of work. The Board of Management is mindful that the support and promotion of staff health and wellbeing is particularly important in the current context where the Covid-19 pandemic has caused considerable challenges for, and disruption to, people's personal, family and social lives as well as their work arrangements.

The Board of Management aims to foster a culture and work environment that support healthy behaviours and staff wellbeing and shall continue to make health and wellbeing tools and guidance available to staff as well as organising suitable support programmes, initiatives and events.

These are challenging times for everyone. Should a staff member experience any stress or anxiety in respect of work or work arrangements, he/she should feel free to speak to the principal.

Doolin National School_ Pre-Return to Work Questionnaire COVID-19

This questionnaire must be completed by staff at least 3 days 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: Doolin NS

Name of Principal: M Moroney Date: _____

Questions	YES	NO
1. Do you have symptoms of cough, fever, high temperature, sore throat, runny nose, breathlessness or flu like symptoms 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. Have you been advised by the HSE that you are you a close contact of a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days?		
4. Have you been advised by a doctor to self-isolate at this time?		
5. Have you been advised by a doctor to cocoon at this time?		
6. Have you been advised by your doctor that you are in the very high risk group? If yes, please liaise with Principal re return to work and follow the agreed DES arrangements for very high risk groups		

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: _____

Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme: COVID-19 response plan for safe reopening of primary schools

From Department of Education and Skills

Published at: 28 July 2020

Last updated 4 August 2020

The department recognises the need for school staff wellbeing and collective self-care. 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'.

Under the EAS, employees have a dedicated free-phone confidential helpline 1800 411 057 available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year providing advice on a range of issues such as wellbeing, legal, financial, mediation, management support and so on.

Where required, short-term counselling is available to employees and their families (over the age of 18 years and living at home). A bespoke wellbeing portal and app which offers access to podcasts and blogs on topics around wellbeing and mental health, family life, exercise and nutrition is also available. In addition online cognitive behavioural therapy is provided.

As part of the services provided by Spectrum.Life a Mental Health Promotion Manager is available to develop and deliver evidence based mental health and wellbeing initiatives to reduce stigma and improve mental health literacy and to increase engagement with the service. They will also be providing a series of webinars and presentations to promote staff wellbeing in schools as schools reopen and during the upcoming school year.

Staggered First Day

Friday 28th August

5th / 6th Class 9.20am – 10.30am

Senior Infants 9.40am – 10.50am

3rd / 4th Class 11.20am – 12.30pm

Junior Infants 11.40am - 12.50pm

1st / 2nd 1pm – 2.10

Daily Staggered Start & Finish Times

Alphabetically by Surnames

Morning Drop Off

9am A – L (17 Families)
9.10am Mc – O'L (17 Families)
9.20am O'N – Z (18 Families)

Evening Time Collection

2.45pm (A-L)
2.55 (Mc – O'L)
3.05 (O'N – Z)