



Durrow N S Response Plan.

Introduction

This *Covid-19 Response Plan* is designed to support the staff and Board of Management Board in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of Covid-19 in Scoil Cholmille. It was originally drawn up in August 2020 and has now been reviewed, February 2021.

The Covid-19 Response Plan details the policies and practices necessary for a school to meet the Government's '*Return to Work Safely Protocol*', the Department of Education and Skills plan for school reopening and to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in the school environment. The plan incorporates current advice about measures to reduce the spread of Covid-19 in the community issued by the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE).

It is important that the resumption of school based teaching and learning and the reopening of school facilities comply with the protocol to minimise the risk to students, staff and others. As the advice issued by NPHE continues to evolve, this protocol and the measures management and staff need to address may also change.

The response plan will support the sustainable reopening of our school where the overriding objective is to protect the health of staff and pupils while promoting the educational and development needs of the children in the school.

In line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol, the key to a safe and continued return to work, and re-opening of our schools requires strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between the Board of management, staff, pupils and parents.

Covid Policy

Durrow 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 Board of Management and all school staff are responsible for the implementation of this plan and a combined effort will help contain the spread of the virus. See Appendix One

Planning and Preparing for Return to School

The Board of Management aims to facilitate the resumption of school based teaching and learning and the return to the workplace of staff. The return to the work is being done safely and in strict adherence to the advice and instructions of public health authorities and the Government.

In August the school buildings and equipment had been checked and signage had been ordered and put in place for return to school.

Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)

In order to return to the workplace, staff will complete a **Return to Work (School) [RTW(s)]** form at least 3 days before the proposed date of return.

Staff have re-engaged with the **Induction Training** provided by gov.ie.

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 and Deputy Lead Worker Representative to carry out a specific role.

Anne Marie Gaughan has been appointed as Lead Worker Representative.

Amy Lynch has been appointed as Deputy Lead Worker Representative.

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.

<i>Name(s) of Lead Worker representative:</i>	<i>Contact details</i>
Anne Marie Gaughan	annemarie.gaughan@durrowns.com
<i>Name(s) of Deputy Lead Worker representative:</i>	<i>Contact details</i>
Amy Lynch	amy.lynch@durrowns.com

All staff, parents/guardians, 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 control measures.

Safety Statement and Risk Assessment

The school has reviewed Risk Assessment and the safety statement will be updated in accordance with this. The risk assessment has been re-circulated amongst all staff.

The ISM team have collaborated and the following document outlines our procedures for the safe return of all to our school.

Underlying Principles of our Back to School Plan

- 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.

Assumptions

- All children return to school and classes operate within a bubble system - classes should not have any contact with other classes. Classes may be further subdivided into pods and classrooms have been reconfigured to ensure at least 1m distance between pods. Pod sizes will be kept as small as is practical in each classroom. Regrouping of pods may occur following natural breaks in the school calendar (Easter...etc)
- The school is split into 2 groups (Junior Infants, Senior Infants, 5th & 6th Class) and (1st,2nd,3rd,4th Class) with each group having different break times and lunch times.
- We have allowed a 20 minute slot at the start of the day to allow staggered intake of pupils through different doorways as far as is possible. Pupils arriving on the school bus will enter the premises when they arrive. Family groups may come to school together but will use their class entrances as normal.
- The day will include 2 x 20-minute staggered breaks.
- Within each senior classroom, where possible, children will be positioned one metre apart individually or within pods of up to a maximum of 6 pupils. Each pod will be 1 metre apart.

- Hand sanitiser will be available in all entrance areas, class and support rooms from non-touch dispensers. Staff will be present at the entrance doors to ensure all children sanitise their hands on arrival every morning.
- A distance of 2 metres is recommended for physical distancing by staff. This is particularly relevant to distancing between adults when they are not engaged in teaching such as the staff room and arriving to work. Physical distancing will be observed between staff members within the staff room through the use of staggered breaks. No more than 3 staff members will be in the staffroom at any given time

Hand Hygiene

- Digital screening and signage around the school and in classrooms will promote good hand hygiene.
- Regular hand hygiene is supported by the availability of hand sanitisation points outside every classroom, toilets and at all entrances. Clean hands must be sanitised on entry to the school/classroom. SNAs will be present to ensure Infants are sanitised on entry/exit of their classrooms.
- In addition to the use of sanitiser, the washing of hands will be encouraged to the greatest extent possible particularly when using the toilet.

The Wearing of Face Coverings/Masks

- In accordance with guidance from the Department of Education, primary school children will not be required to wear face coverings under any circumstances. However, if they wish to wear face coverings, they may do so.
- Cloth face coverings are not suitable for children under the age of 13 and anyone who:
 - has trouble breathing - is unconscious or incapacitated - is unable to remove it without help - has special needs to who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the face covering.

Respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette

- The school will display digital screening and signage promoting respiratory hygiene and cough/sneeze etiquette.
- Teachers will teach respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette.
- Parents should reinforce the message from the school.

Environmental hygiene

A cleaning checklist (Appendix 2) has been reviewed and we will continue with our robust cleaning schedule.

The school has received additional funding to support enhanced cleaning required to minimise the risks of COVID-19. Teaching staff will be provided with cleaning supplies to

minimise the risk of spread of the virus. To ensure enhanced cleaning regimes can be implemented additional cleaning hours have been secured. All classrooms will leave all their tables and chairs clear to allow for our school to be fogged at the end of every school day. Particular care will be taken in relation to hygiene and cleaning arrangements for hand washing and toilet facilities. Similarly, an emphasis will be placed on cleaning communal eating areas (staff rooms) and frequently touched surfaces – door handles, switches, push-panels and dispensers.

The outdoor toilets will be assigned to designated classes and will be cleaned between breaks and at the end of the school day.

All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area.

School Commencement times:

To facilitate the maintenance of social distance we have made changes to our school commencement times.

- All children, from Junior Infants to Second, can be dropped off between 8:45 and 9:05am.
- School bus children will enter the school when they arrive.
- Family groups will enter when they arrive.

Entrance & Exit Points for Specific Classes

Start of school Day:

Senior classes and First class will enter through doors on the right of the school building (Door A) as you face the school.

Junior classes enter through doors on the left of the school building (Door B) as you face the school.

Children will be met by school staff where they will sanitize and go straight to their classroom. There they will be met by their teacher and get ready for school work.

No parents/guardians will be allowed in the school building, unless by arrangement.

End of School Day:

Infants will leave at 1.30 pm. Junior and Senior infants will be collected from the back of the school. A one way system will be in operation so parents/ guardians will go to the back of the school using the path on the left hand side (by 2nd class) and exit using the path on the right hand side (by the P.E.hall) We will release the children as we see the parents.

- 2.20pm to 2.30pm: 1st and 2nd will exit the school through separate doors.
- 2.30pm to 2.40pm: 3rd to 6th classes will exit through separate doors, starting with 3rd and 4th.

As with school entry, school exit will be supervised by staff. We ask for co-operation with these times as it will mean that the numbers congregating on school grounds at any one time will be minimised.

We will facilitate parents who wish to drop their children or collect them outside of these times. Parents will need to let us know by email or phone in advance of any such arrangement.

No parents/guardians, other than staff members, should enter the building.

Messages for teachers can be sent by email to the teacher or by phoning the school office.

Parents/guardians for pupils in 1st to 6th class, who are collecting their children from school at the end of the day, should wait outside the railings or in the front playground area.

We are asking parents to maintain adequate social distance when dropping and collecting children.

Collection of Children during the School Day:

When children are being collected during the course of the school day, the following arrangements will apply:

- When parents arrive at the school, they should phone the office to alert the office that they have arrived.
- The child will be brought from their class by a member of staff to the reception area.
- Sign out book will be immediately inside the door and parents/guardians will be allowed access to sign this book.
- Again, no parents/guardians will enter the school building, unless invited to do so.

Access to the School Building

Arrangements for necessary visitors and parents are restricted to essential purposes and limited to those who have obtained prior approval from the principal. **Face coverings must be worn by all visitors to the school, hands must be sanitised** on entry and during visits and **social distancing** of 2 metres must be maintained.

A detailed sign in/sign out log of those entering the school facilities will be maintained. This information is collected and held as a crucial step in restricting the spread of the virus and protecting the health and safety of pupils, staff, parents and visitors to the school.

Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19

Staff or pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of COVID-19. The following outlines how a school should deal with a suspected case that may arise in a school setting.

Pupils:

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

1. Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately.
2. The child will be accompanied to the designated isolation room by a member of staff. Our isolation room is a designated resource room a few metres from the front door.
3. 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.
4. A mask will be provided by the class teacher for the child presenting with symptoms, if one is available. He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises.
5. 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.
6. If the child is well enough to go home, the school will arrange for them to be transported home by a family member or the designated emergency contact, 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.
7. 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 Covid-19 suspect.
8. Arrangements will be made for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area, classroom area and work areas involved.

In the event of a pupil being referred for a Covid-19 test, the class teacher will be notified. Confidentiality will be respected.

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 confirmed. The instructions of the HSE should be followed. The HSE takes responsibility in this area, not the school, and subsequent communication and decisions are taken by the HSE will be carried out by the management of the school in accordance with HSE advice and guidelines. Decisions re closure of the school is made by the HSE.

Staff:

The following procedure shall be followed if a staff member develops any symptoms of acute respiratory infection including cough, fever, shortness of breath or sudden loss of taste or smell while at school:

- They will be asked by the principal to go home without delay and contact their GP by telephone.
- They should remain 2 metres away from others where possible.
- They should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects and be advised to cover their mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the bin.
- If tissues are not available, they should cough and sneeze into the crook of their elbow.
- If they can tolerate doing so and one is available, they should wear a clean cloth face covering or a surgical mask.
- If they must wait, then they should do so in an isolation room or other identified area away from others and remain mindful of the need to observe good respiratory and hand hygiene.
- If they need to use toilet facilities they should wipe contact surfaces for example taps clean and clean their hands after attending the toilet. Following a suspected case an assessment of the incident will be carried out which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery.
- Appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved will be arranged at the earliest convenience.

Where there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 amongst school staff or pupils, schools need to maintain both staff and pupil confidentiality at all times and must follow the instructions of HSE Public Health.

Children who should not attend school:

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

- Children who have been diagnosed with Covid-19
- Children who have been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with Covid-19
- Children who have a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending
- 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
- Children who have returned home after travelling abroad and must self-isolate for a period of 14 days
- Children who are generally unwell

Supporting the Learning of Children who cannot attend school

If a child has been advised to self-isolate at home, or is unable to attend school for Covid medically certified reasons, the class teacher (and/or the learning support teacher, where relevant) will suggest and share activities to support the child's learning at home. The class teacher will need to be contacted (via email) in this instance.

In other cases, where the child is not attending school because of parental concern about the spread of covid, the class teacher will email a learning log at the end of each week so the children have the opportunity to keep up to date themselves with the ongoing learning in the

classroom.

Impact of a Suspected or Confirmed Case of Covid-19 in a Class

If the school is notified that a pupil in the class has been referred for a test, the class teacher will be informed.

If there is a **confirmed case** of Covid-19 in the school:

- The parents of the children in the child's or staff member's class will be notified.
- Public health advice will be sought and followed.

Personal Equipment

- All Children will bring their own pens, pencils, colours, rubbers, etc., to school in their own pencil case and will be advised not to share any personal belongings with any other pupil in their pod or bubble setting. These items will remain in school.
- It is further requested that all items have the child's name on them for ease of identification.
- Personal belongings will be stored in designated areas, to ensure all desks/chairs are cleaned thoroughly on a daily basis. Every child will have their own storage space/shelf.

Shared Equipment:

By necessity, some classroom equipment needs to be shared including equipment used for structured activities and play in Infant classrooms. To lower the risk of spreading infection play items, toys, concrete materials and their storage will be cleaned and disinfected at regular intervals.

We will not be introducing chrome books or laptops for shared use for a few weeks until we have robust systems in place and can be assured of compliance and safe use of equipment.

Yards

To ensure bubbles do not mix:

- Break times will be staggered.
- The yard will be segregated and marked.
- Doors will be assigned to each class to avoid large gatherings.
- At the end of break the senior classes will be collected from their assigned area by their class teacher.
- Junior classes will line up as normal (in their pods)

If the pitch can be used it will be divided into 4 distinct areas for each class with obvious visible physical boundaries.

Learning Support

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

A specific SEN teacher will be involved in only two/three classes. This is also under review.

The provision of support will be organised to ensure our support teachers will work within the confines of a bubble.

- 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 and the children.
- Where children from 3rd to 6th 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.

PPE

All school staff will wear masks.

Also, staff who are attending to particular care needs or who are administering first aid will wear appropriate PPE including gloves and face masks.

Teacher Absence and Substitution

In the event that a 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 a SET teacher will step in.

There will be students from colleges of education completing school placement on site who may also be called upon. All are fully vetted and are close to completing their degrees. Their teaching will be classroom-teacher-led if possible.

PE

Where possible, PE should take place outdoors and use of equipment will be confined to individual class groupings.

Extra-curricular Activities

The possibility of facilitating extra-curricular activities will be explored. However, we are going to concentrate on everyone returning to school safely and reassess our progress in mid to late October and further consideration will be given to further activities then.

Checklists

Checklists contained in the appendices of the Government's Covid-19 Response Plan for the Safe and Sustainable Reopening of Primary and Special Schools will be utilised by management, Lead Worker Representatives and staff to ensure a safe reopening which complies with Public Health Guidance.

Appendix 1 COVID- 19 Policy Statement

Durrow 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 Board of Management 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.

The original policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 27th August 2020.

Appendix 2 Checklist for Cleaning

1. Have you a system in place for checking and keeping up to date with the latest public health advice from the Government and the Department of Education, to ensure that advice is made available in a timely manner in order to adjust your cleaning procedures in line with that advice?
2. Have you reviewed the HPSC interim health advice for the safe reopening of schools, in particular *Section 5.6 Environmental Hygiene*?
3. Have you explained the need for the enhanced cleaning regime to staff?
4. Are you aware that cleaning is best achieved using a general purpose detergent and warm water, clean cloths, mops and the mechanical action of wiping and cleaning, followed by rinsing and drying?
5. Have you sufficient cleaning materials in place to support the enhanced cleaning regime?
6. Have you provided training for cleaning staff on the enhanced cleaning regime?
7. Have you made arrangements for the regular and safe emptying of bins?
8. Are you familiar with the cleaning options for school settings set out in the interim HPSC health advice for schools for surfaces, toilets, cleaning equipment, PPE and waste management?
9. Are you aware that each school setting should be cleaned once per day?
10. Have you provided cleaning materials to staff so that they can clean their own desk or immediate workspace?
11. Have you advised staff that they are responsible for cleaning personal items that have been brought to work and are likely to be handled at work or during breaks (for example, mobile phone and laptops) and to avoid leaving them down on communal surfaces or they will need to clean the surface after the personal item is removed?
12. Have you advised staff and pupils to avoid sharing items such as cups, bottles, cutlery, and pens?
13. Have you put in place a written cleaning schedule to be made available to cleaning staff including: Items and areas to be cleaned/Frequency of cleaning/Cleaning materials to be used/Equipment to be used and method of operation?
14. If disinfection of contaminated surfaces is required, is a system in place to do this following cleaning?
15. If cleaning staff have been instructed to wear gloves when cleaning are they aware of the need to wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water, both before and after wearing gloves?
16. Have you a system in place for the disposal of cleaning cloths and used wipes in a rubbish bag? *Current HSE guidance recommends waste such as cleaning waste, tissues etc. from*

a person suspected of having COVID-19 should be double bagged and stored in a secure area for 72 hours before being presented for general waste collection.

17. Have you ensured there is a system in place to make sure reusable cleaning equipment including mop heads and non-disposable cloths are clean before re-use?
18. Have you ensured there is a system in place to ensure that equipment such as buckets are emptied and cleaned with a fresh solution of disinfectant before re-use?