

Doonaha National School
Doonaha, Kilkee, Co. Clare
Tel. (065) 9057084
Email: dunatha@gmail.com
Website : doonahans.com
Principal: Gillian Collins
Roll No: 12848G

Covid-19 Response Plan March 2021

This Covid-19 Response Plan is designed to support the staff and Board of Management in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of Covid-19 in **Doonaha NS**.

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 developmental 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. This document aims to provide details of:

1. COVID-19 School Policy
2. Planning and Preparing for Return to School
3. Control measures - To prevent Introduction and Spread of COVID-19 in Schools
4. Impact of COVID-19 on certain school activities
5. Hygiene and Cleaning in School
6. Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19
7. Special Educational Needs
8. Staff Duties
9. COVID related absence management

10. Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

The assistance and cooperation of all staff, pupils, parents/guardians, contractors and visitors is critical to the success of the plan.

The plan is a live working document and may be reviewed and amended to take into account new guidance from www.Gov.ie / www.hse.ie

1. COVID-19 Policy

This COVID-19 policy outlines our commitment as a school to implement the plan and help prevent the spread of the virus. The policy will be signed and dated by the Principal and Chairperson of the Board of Management and brought to the attention of staff, pupils, parents and others.

COVID 19 Policy Statement

Doonaha 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 and Skills
- keep a contact log to help with contact tracing
- ensure staff and pupils engage with the induction / familiarisation briefing provided by the Department of Education and Skills
- 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 and Skills 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:

Signed: _____

Date: _____

2. 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 workplace must be done safely and in strict adherence to the advice and instructions of public health authorities and the Government. Details for the reopening of the school and the applicable controls are outlined in this document.

Before reopening the school, the BOM will have processes in place to include the following:

- Arrangements to keep up to date with public health advice, changes to any Government plans for the safe reopening of society and Department of Education updates
- Arrangements to pass on this information in a timely manner to staff, pupils, parents and others as required
- Ensured that staff have reviewed the training materials provided by the Department of Education
- Provided staff with access to the Return to Work (RTW) form
- Identified a Lead Worker representative
- Displayed posters and other signage to prevent introduction and spread of COVID-19
- Made the necessary changes to the school or classroom layout if necessary to support the redesign of classrooms to support physical distancing
- Removed unnecessary clutter to facilitate ongoing cleaning of the school, taking into account the importance of having educational materials to create a stimulating learning environment
- Updated the health and safety risk assessment
- Made necessary arrangements to limit access to the school to necessary visitors and maintain records of contacts to the school
- Reviewed the school buildings to check the following:
 1. Does the water system need flushing at outlets following low usage to prevent Legionella ?

2. Has school equipment and mechanical ventilation been checked for signs of deterioration or damage before being used again ?
3. Have bin collections and other essential services resumed ?

2.1. Induction Training

All staff will undertake and complete Covid-19 Induction Training prior to returning to the school building. The aim of such training is to ensure that staff have full knowledge and understanding of the following:

- Latest up to-date advice and guidance on public health;
- Covid-19 symptoms;
- What to do if a staff member or pupil develops symptoms of Covid-19 while at school;
- Outline of the Covid-19 response plan.

Staff will be kept fully informed of the control measures in place in the school and their duties and responsibilities in preventing the spread of Covid-19 and will be updated with any changes to the control measures or guidance available from the public health authorities.

If a staff member is unsure about any aspect of the Covid-19 Response Plan, the associated control measures, or his/her duties, he/she should immediately seek guidance from the Principal, who is supported in this role by the BOM/ETB

A national information campaign to support parents and pupils will happen in advance of schools reopening on issues such as COVID-19 awareness and to help minimise the risk of introduction and spread of the virus in schools.

2.2. Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)

In order to return to the workplace, staff must complete a Return to Work (RTW) form, which is available electronically or from the Principal. A hard copy is attached also at Appendix 1.

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

The principal will also provide details of the Induction Training for completion by staff 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.

People at very high risk (extremely vulnerable):

Current public health guidelines have identified groups who are defined as being at very high risk. The HSE has set out these groups, which include people who:

- are over 70 years of age - even if you're fit and well
- have had an organ transplant
- are undergoing active chemotherapy for cancer
- are having radical radiotherapy for lung cancer

- have cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
- are having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
- are having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
- have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
- severe respiratory conditions including cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, pulmonary fibrosis, lung fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and severe COPD
- have a condition that means you have a very high risk of getting infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell)
- are taking medicine that makes you much more likely to get infections (such as high doses of steroids or immunosuppression therapies)
- have a serious heart condition and you are pregnant

The advice for this group is available from the HSE. Staff who are in this group should self-declare on the Return to Work form if they believe that they are at very high risk. Details of the leave arrangements that will apply will be updated by the Department of Education and Skills.

If the Board/Principal is unsure whether or not staff fall into the very high-risk category, advice will be sought from the Occupational Health Service.

2.3. 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.

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

- 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 the employer 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;

- Assist school management with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace in line with the Return to 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;
- Make representations to school management on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.

The school will appoint one Lead Worker Representative and a Deputy Lead Worker Representative who will deputise as LWR where the LWR is absent.

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 who will engage with the Principal/BOM.

Name of Lead Worker Representative	Contact details
Gillian Collins	gdonnelly@doonahans.com
Name of Deputy Worker Representative	Contact details
Bozena Zajas	bozena@doonahans.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.

2.4. Signage

The school will be required to display signage outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene. The posters will be displayed in prominent areas such as the office, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilets.

2.5. Making Changes to School Layout

Maintaining physical distancing in the school environment is recommended as one of the key control measures to minimize the risk of the introduction and spread of COVID19.

Junior Infants-2nd Class will remain in the Junior Room, where they will also eat. 3rd-6th classes will be in the Senior Room, where they will eat. The teachers will move between rooms. Art and PE will be taught separately. The SET will use the kitchen area for withdrawal as previously done. Juniors will play on the back yard, while the Seniors will use the front yard. Children will sit at individual desks, 1m apart, and will be provided with their own writing stationery and writing materials. Senior students will have all necessary books and copies in a shelf.

2.6. Safety Statement and Risk Assessment

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment. A risk assessment to identify the control measures required to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 in school settings is attached to this policy.

The school's emergency procedures involving fire safety, first aid, accidents and dangerous occurrences will be reviewed to consider any new risks that arise due to the school's COVID-19 Response Plan.

The school's existing risk assessment will be reviewed to consider any new risks that arise due to the school's COVID-19 Response Plan.

2.7. Access to School and Contact Log

Access to the school building will be in line with agreed school procedures. Arrangements for necessary visitors such as contractors and parents will be restricted to essential purposes and limited to those who have obtained prior approval from the principal. The Department of Education Inspectorate may also need to visit the schools to support as appropriate in the implementation of public health advice relating to creating a safe learning and working environment for all.

The prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a crucial step in restricting the spread of the virus and protecting the health and safety of the individuals themselves and other staff, contractors and visitors at the workplace. A detailed sign in/sign out log of those entering the school facilities will be maintained. The school will maintain a log of staff and pupil contacts.

3. Control Measures - To prevent Introduction and Spread of COVID-19 in Schools

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms. They are:

- High temperature

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- Loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste

The best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in a school is to minimise the risk of introduction of the disease into the school setting in the first place. This can be achieved through the following measures:

- Promote awareness of COVID-19 and its symptoms amongst staff, pupils, parents and visitors.
- Advise staff and parents of pupils who have symptoms of COVID-19 or other acute infectious diseases not to attend school, to phone their GP and follow the HSE guidance on self-isolation.
- Advise staff and parents of pupils who have been identified by the HSE as a contact of a person with COVID-19 to follow the **current** HSE advice.
- Ensure that staff and pupils know what to do if they develop symptoms at school.
- Everyone entering the school building should be required to perform hand hygiene with hand sanitiser.
- Visitors to school during the day should be by prior arrangement and should be received at a specific contact point.
- All staff members, visitors and children from 3rd to 6th should wear face coverings.

Staff, pupils and visitors should at all times adhere to the **up to date** advice and instructions of the public health authorities in relation to protecting oneself and others against the risk posed by the Covid-19 virus.

Updated advice from the HSE is available on its website –

<https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/> The Department of Education and Skills will ensure all updated advice is circulated to schools. **Doonaha NS** will arrange for this advice to be circulated to staff, pupils and visitors in a timely manner.

Managing the risk of spread of COVID-19

A. Wash your hands frequently

Regular hand washing with soap and water is effective for the removal of COVID-19. Follow the HSE guidelines on handwashing. For advice from HSE on how to wash your hands the following link will be helpful: <https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html>

B. Hand Hygiene and Hand Sanitisers

Hand hygiene can also be achieved by the use of a hand sanitisers (when hands are clean). Hand sanitisers are more readily deployed in school settings to avoid disruption to teaching and learning and to avoid congestion of staff and pupils

waiting to use hand washing facilities. They will be available at entry and exit points and in each classroom.

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;
- When they cough or sneeze.

C. Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth

Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth.

D. Physical distancing and ventilation

Physical distancing is recommended to reduce the spread of infection in the workplace. Guidance on the physical distancing requirements will be informed by public health advice for schools.

All windows in the classrooms and common areas will remain open during school hours.

E. Practice respiratory hygiene

Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your bent elbow when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately. By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and Covid19.

Good hygiene practices and washing your hands properly and regularly can help stop the spread of the virus. It is, therefore, crucial that all staff adhere to this advice and adopt the following practices as strictly as possible.

Do

- Wash your hands properly and often
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough and sneeze
- Put used tissues into a bin and wash your hands
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Do Not

- Touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean

- Share objects that touch your mouth – for example, bottles, cups, cutlery, etc.

F. Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE will not be required to be worn within the school facility according to current occupational and public health guidance. However, for a limited number of staff, PPE will need to be used occasionally or constantly due to the nature of certain work activities or work areas. Such include roles where:

- Performing intimate care
- Where a suspected case of Covid-19 is identified while the school is in operation

Appropriate PPE will be available for dealing with suspected COVID-19 cases, intimate care needs and for first aid. This will be updated as appropriate in line with advice from the HPSC.

Where staff provide healthcare to children with medical needs in the school environment they should apply standard precautions as per usual practice.

All adults will wear face masks/visors, and there will be perspex screens on each teacher desk. Students from 3rd class to 6th are required to wear facial coverings.

Wearing of Gloves:

The use of disposable gloves in the school setting by pupils or staff is not appropriate. It does not protect the wearer and may expose others to risk from contaminated gloves. Routine use of disposable gloves is not a substitute for hand hygiene.

4. Impact of COVID-19 on Certain School Activities

Choir/Music Performance

Choir / music practices/performances will be temporarily suspended..

Shared Equipment

Toys: All toys will be cleaned on a regular basis. This will remove dust and dirt that can harbour germs.

Art: Senior and Junior students will be provided with their own individual art and equipment supplies.

Electronics – Each child in the school will be provided with an iPad for classwork, which will be wiped regularly. Homework will be online.

Library Policy: Pupils will have their Accelerated Reader books. These can be borrowed and taken home in a sealed plastic bag. On their return these books will be placed in isolation for a minimum of 72hrs, before being returned to the Library.

Shared Sports Equipment: Equipment sharing will be minimised, and cleaned regularly..

5. Hygiene and Cleaning in School

Arrangements for more regular and thorough cleaning of areas and surfaces within the school will be made. Regular and thorough cleaning of communal areas and

frequently touched surfaces shall be conducted, in particular, toilets, door handles and the kitchen. Cleaning will be performed daily and whenever facilities or surfaces are visibly dirty.

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

Under no circumstances should these cleaning materials be removed from the building. Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day.

There will be regular collection of used waste disposal bags from offices and other areas within the school facility.

Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.), placing them in the dishwasher .

6. 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 **Doonaha NS** will deal with a suspected case that may arise during the course of work.

A designated isolation area should be identified within the school building. The possibility of having more than one person displaying signs of Covid-19 should be considered and a contingency plan for dealing with additional cases put in place. The designated isolation area should if possible be behind a closed door and away from other staff and pupils.

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while at work in **Doonaha NS** the following are the procedures to be implemented:

- If the person with the suspected case is a pupil, the parents/guardians should be contacted immediately
 - Isolate the person and have a procedure in place to accompany the individual to the designated isolation area via the isolation route, keeping at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic person at all times
 - Provide a mask for the person 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
 - Assess whether the individual who is displaying symptoms can immediately be directed to go home/be brought home by parents and call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home
-
- Facilitate the person presenting with symptoms remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and facilitate them calling their doctor. The

individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects.

Advice should be given to the person presenting with symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bag provided

- If the person is well enough to go home, arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible and advise them to inform their general practitioner 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, contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a Covid-19 suspect.
- Carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery
- Arrange for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.

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. The instructions of the HSE should be followed and staff confidentiality is essential at all times.

7.Special Educational Needs

Additional considerations for those with Special Educational Needs:

For children with special educational needs (SEN) maintaining physical distancing in many instances will not be practical or appropriate to implement. The focus should therefore be on emphasising that parents/guardians should have a heightened awareness of signs, symptoms or changes in baseline which suggests illness/COVID-19 infection and where symptoms are present children should not attend school.

8. Staff Duties

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. The cooperation and assistance of all staff is essential to reduce the risk of spread of Covid-19 and to protect health and safety as far as possible within the school. All staff have a key role to play.
- ✓ 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 at home 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.

9. Covid-Related Absence Management

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

10. 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.

Chairperson : _____

Principal : _____

Date : _____