

St. Kevin's N.S. Plan for Re-opening of the School

Themes which are critical to our ability to minimising risk associated with COVID-19 in our schools

- *A balanced approach* - one of the key challenges for schools during this pandemic is to balance the need for a practical and sensible level of caution with the need to provide a supportive environment for pupils/students and where teachers feel able to engage with pupils in a way that supports their learning.
- *Apply common sense* - An atmosphere of fear and an overwhelming preoccupation with infection and hygiene can be harmful to teachers and pupils and to the quality of the educational experience without materially reducing the risk of infection beyond what can be achieved with a common-sense approach.
- *Create awareness* - heightened awareness by staff, parents and children (where age appropriate) is required so that they know how to protect themselves and each other and how to recognise and report symptoms of COVID-19 infection.
- *Do everything practical to avoid introduction of Covid-19 into the school* - the most critical part of managing the risks of COVID-19 related to schools is doing everything practical to avoid introduction of COVID-19 into the school. If the infection is not introduced it cannot spread. The risk of introduction is related to how common the infection is in the community served by the school at a given time. If the infection is uncommon in the community then the likelihood of introduction is much lower.
- *Stay at home if unwell* - no person (child, teacher or parent) should attend school if unwell or any members of their household are unwell with symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
- *Keep doing the key measures to keep us all safe* - social (physical) distancing, hand hygiene and good respiratory etiquette should be observed by all (children, teachers, parents and visitors). In addition, face coverings will be worn by adults where a 2m distance cannot be maintained.

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.

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Physical Distancing

Physical Distancing will be achieved in two ways:

- *Increasing Separation.* This will be achieved by re-configuring the classrooms to maximise physical distancing. Each class will be referred to as a bubble and we will ensure that there is as little contact as possible between children in different bubbles. Within the bubbles, children will be organised into pods. A pod is a group of children (normally 6) who will sit together and who will stay in their pod while in the bubble, or classroom. Perspex screens will be installed in some classrooms, where necessary.
- *Decreasing Interaction.* This will be achieved by decreasing the potential for children from different bubbles to interact. Insofar as possible, each class group will enter and exit the school via a separate entrance. Bubbles will have different mid-morning and lunch-time breaks. We will make these routines enjoyable activities for the children, emphasising safety at all times.

Physical distancing measures

- Children from Junior Infants to 2nd Class are not required to maintain a physical distance.
- Children from Third to Sixth class are expected to maintain 1 metre distance between them where possible.
- The day will include 2 x 20 minute breaks where children will play in the yard.
- Staff will endeavour to maintain physical distance from children as much as possible and will wear face coverings and other PPE when needed.
- School drop-off and collection will take place at staggered intervals to allow for social distancing.

Staggered Break Times

Time	Class	Location
10:40 – 11:00	Junior and Senior Infants	Back Yard Area 1
	Senior Infants and First Class	Back Yard Area 2
	Second and Third Class	Basketball Court
11:10 – 11:30	Fourth and Fifth Class	Basketball Court
	Sixth Class	Front of School
12:40 – 1:00	Junior and Senior Infants	Back Yard Area 1
	Senior Infants and First Class	Back Yard Area 2
	Second and Third Class	Basketball Court
1:10 – 1:30	Fourth and Fifth Class	Basketball Court
	Sixth Class	Front of School

Staggered Drop-off times by surname:

Start Time	Pupils with Surname
08:50	A – G
08:55	H – Mc only (all other M surnames, see below)
09:00	M - Z

Staggered Collection time for Junior and Senior Infants

Start Time	Pupils with Surname
13:40	A – G
13:45	H – Mc only (all other M surnames, see below)
13:50	M - Z

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Staggered Collection time for all other class groups (1st to 6th Class):

Start Time	Pupils with Surname
14:40	A – G
14:45	H – Mc only (all other M surnames, see below)
14:50	M - Z

- We ask for co-operation with these times to minimise the numbers congregating on school grounds at any one time.
- Pupils must proceed directly to their classroom at their allocated drop-off time via the entry point shown below.
- Parents must not enter the school building for any reason, unless by prior appointment.

Key to Entrances & Exits

Entrance and Exit Points	Classes
Main School Door	Second & Third Class
Main School Door	Sixth Class
Fire exit to back yard (Classroom 1)	Junior and Senior Infants
Fire exit to back yard (Classroom 2)	Senior Infants & First Class
Fire exit door in corridor beside Classroom 3	Fourth and Fifth Class
Main School Door	Visitors to school (by prior appointment only)

Communication with Teachers

- Parents will not be permitted to enter the school building.
- Appointments may be made to visit the school for essential purposes. A contact tracing log will need to be filled out for each visit.
- To communicate with your child's teacher, write a note in their homework folder/diary, telephone the school or send an email. Teachers will be unable to respond to emails during the school day.
- Please see email addresses per teacher below:
 Junior and Senior Infants: rashfieldkevinsns@gmail.com
 Senior Infants and First Class: callankeenankevinsns@gmail.com
 Second and Third Class: amcgeekevinsns@gmail.com
 Fourth and Fifth Class: ghalpennykevinsns@gmail.com
 Sixth Class and Principal Teacher: stkevinsnsprincipal@gmail.com
 Special Education Teachers: ambyrnekevinsns@gmail.com and dkeanekevinsns@gmail.com

Collection of Children during the School Day (e.g. for scheduled appointment)

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, they should either telephone the office (041 6851902) or ring the door bell at the main entrance to alert school staff to their presence.
- The child will be brought from their class to the adult by a member of school staff.
- The adult who is collecting will be asked to sign the child out.
- No adult should enter the school building, unless invited to do so

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Collection of Pupils at End of School Day

- Adults who are collecting children at the end of the school day should no longer wait outside the school wall. This will ensure they can accompany pupils safely from the school grounds and ensure that social distancing is maintained at all times.
- Please read the information below carefully and familiarise yourself with the new entrance and exit routes from school grounds at collection time.
- Adults are requested to maintain 2m social distance within school grounds at all times.
- We ask that all adults enter and exit the school grounds swiftly at their allotted collection times to minimise the amount of people on school grounds at any one time.

Collection of pupils from Junior Infants, Senior Infants and First Class

- Adults who are collecting their children from the following classes should wait in the **back yard**:
 - Junior and Senior Infants - in the vicinity of Classroom 1 fire exit door.
 - Senior Infants and First Class - in the vicinity of Classroom 2 fire exit door.
- To avoid congestion, adults who are collecting children from the back yard are requested to enter the school grounds using the main front gate, proceed to the back yard via the side gate within school grounds and use the side entrance to the community centre car park to exit the back yard.
- Adults who are collecting more than one child, are asked to collect the **youngest child** first and proceed to collect older children as you exit the school grounds.

Collection of pupils from Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Class

- To ensure social distancing and safe collection of children, adults who are collecting their children from school should wait in the **front yard** for the following classes:
 - Second and Third Class - in the vicinity of (but not blocking) main school gate. Enter via main gate and exit via double gates at end of school wall.
 - Fourth and Fifth Class – adjacent to Sensory Garden gate. Enter via main gate and exit via double gates at end of school wall.
 - Sixth Class - in front of staff room windows. Enter via main gate and exit via double gates at end of school wall.
- Adults who are collecting more than one child, are asked to collect the **youngest child** first and proceed to collect older children as you exit the school grounds.

Hand Hygiene

Children will perform hand hygiene regularly during the school day:

- on arrival at school
- before eating or drinking
- after using the toilet
- after a cough or sneeze
- after playing outdoors
- when hands are physically dirty

Hand sanitiser dispensers have been installed in every classroom throughout the school. They are also available at the main entrance points for visitor use.

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Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Staff, including teachers, who cannot maintain a 2m distance from students or other staff will be required to wear face coverings.

All SNAs will be required to wear face masks, or in certain situations, clear visors, in the classroom.

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

Classroom Equipment and Resources

- Children in Junior, Senior Infants and First Class will be provided with an individual container to hold each child's pencils, crayons, etc. This will be labelled with their name.
- In so far as possible, it is requested that children from Second to Sixth Class bring their own pens, pencils, colours, rubbers, etc., to school in their own pencil case to avoid the sharing of equipment.
- It is further requested that all items have the child's name on them for ease of identification.

Shared Equipment

By necessity, some classroom equipment needs to be shared including tablets, laptops and the equipment used for structured activities and play in Infant classrooms. Cleaning of such shared equipment with wipes or other cleaning products will take place at regular intervals to minimise the risk of the spread of infection.

PE

Where possible, PE will take place outdoors and use of equipment will be confined to individual class groupings. We will endeavour to minimise equipment sharing and clean shared equipment between uses by different people. In addition, teaching staff will refer to the HPSC guidance on Return to Sport. Link to return to sport protocols is found here.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/07253-return-to-sport-protocols/>

Children with Additional Needs

The Special Education Team will make sure that your child's needs are catered for to the best of our ability. In keeping with our Special Education policy, learning support will be provided by a blended approach of in-class support and withdrawal. 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. Pupils from 3rd to 6th Class who receive support in one of the SET rooms will be required to maintain social distancing of 1 metre between each child in the group. The tables and chairs in SET rooms will be cleaned in between different groups attending.

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, it is not appropriate for the class to be divided into groups and accommodated in other classes. In such circumstances, the Department of Education has advised that it is possible to deploy a Special Education Teacher to the mainstream classroom and "bank" the day. A substitute teacher may be employed on a later day when one is available to help recover time lost by pupils with Special Education Needs on the day the SET was

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deployed to the classroom. Where more than one teacher is absent and it is not possible to secure a sufficient amount of substitute teachers, 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.

Very high-risk Pupils

Pupils at high risk may not be able to return to school. These pupils will receive appropriate support to engage with learning. Ongoing connection with the classmates and school community will be ensured.

The list of people in very high risk groups includes people who:

- 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
- have severe respiratory conditions including cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, pulmonary fibrosis, lung fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and severe COPD
- have a condition that means they 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)

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 are a household contact of 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 from countries which are not on the Green List 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 is not able to attend school for an extended period of time, the class teacher (and/or the learning support teacher, where relevant) will provide suggested activities to support the child's learning at home.

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Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19

Pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19. The symptoms of Covid-19 include:

- High temperature (38 degrees or above)
- Cough
- Shortness of Breath or Difficulty Breathing
- Loss of smell or taste, or distortion of taste

Further information on COVID-19 symptoms in children is available at: -

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/if-your-child-has-symptoms.html>

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

- Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately. The school must have updated contact details for parents/guardians. These can be updated by parents via the Aladdin app.
- The child will be accompanied to the designated isolation area by a member of staff. 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.
- 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 and while exiting the premises.
- Parents are requested to call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home. If the pupil is referred for a Covid-19 test, the pupil's siblings must also remain at home pending the test result.
- If the pupil cannot immediately go home, the school will facilitate the child presenting with symptoms to remain in isolation and will assist them by calling their GP.
- The child presenting with symptoms will 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 bin provided in the isolation area.
- If the child is too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick child has possible Covid-19 symptoms.
- Arrangements will be made for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.

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

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 and pupil confidentiality is essential at all times.

How you can help your child to prepare to return to school

- Practice washing hands properly, with soap, for 20 seconds. Make sure that your child also knows how to dry their hand thoroughly.
- Children should also know how to use hand-sanitiser correctly, and that it should not be ingested. Sanitiser will be provided by the school – children should not bring their own supply.
- Teach your child correct cough and sneeze etiquette – they should cough or sneeze into a tissue, or into their elbow if they do not have a tissue. Put the tissue in the bin and wash or sanitise your hands. All classrooms have been supplied with pedal operated bins with lids.

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- Make sure that your child can INDEPENDENTLY open and close their schoolbag, lunch box and bottle. Please do not send *Frubes* or any other items which are difficult to open as teachers will not be able to help.
- Choose lunchboxes, bottles and pencil cases that are easy to clean, as they will need to be cleaned frequently.
- Ensure that your child does not have any unnecessary items such as toys in their schoolbag.
- Teach your child to put on and take off their coat independently.
- Teach your child to tie their shoelaces independently. If your child is unable to do so, please buy shoes with Velcro straps.
- If your child seems anxious about returning to school, talk to them about their concerns. Ensure they feel heard and reassure them that the teachers will help to settle them into their new routines as quickly as possible. Remind them that, even though some things will be different, they will see their friends again daily and still be able to have lots of fun.

We thank all parents in advance for their cooperation in complying with these measures to ensure the health and safety of our pupils, staff and local community. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the school principal via email to stkevinsprincipal@gmail.com