



Reopening Our School-Plan for Ballindaggin NS

(based on the Response Plan for the Safe & Sustainable reopening of Primary schools published by the Department of Education which can be read in full at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a0bff-reopening-our-primary-and-special-schools/#covid-19-response-plan-for-safe-reopening-of-primary-and-special-schools>)

A range of essential control measures have been implemented to reduce the risk of the spread of Covid-19 virus and to protect the safety, health and welfare of staff, pupils, parents and visitors as far as possible within the school. The control measures shall continue to be reviewed and updated as required on an ongoing basis. It is critical that staff, pupils, parents and visitors are aware of, and adhere to, the control measures outlined and that they fully cooperate with all health and safety requirements.

As a school, our aim as we re-open is to provide a safe and calm environment for our pupils and staff. The purpose of this plan is to provide clear guidance in relation to new procedures at school.

This plan is subject to change at any time, depending on HSE and Department of Education guidelines.

How to Minimise the Risk of Introduction of COVID-19 into Ballindaggin NS

- Staff and pupils that have symptoms should not attend school, should phone their doctor for advice and should follow HSE guidance on self-isolation;
- Staff and pupils should not attend school if they have been identified by the HSE as a contact for person with COVID-19 and should follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement;
- Staff and pupils that develop symptoms at school should bring this to the attention of the Principal promptly;
- Pupils will wash their hands on arrival to the classroom.
- Those entering the school building need to perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser;
- Visitors to the school during the day should be by prior arrangement, will be received at the secretary's office and will be required to fill in a Contact Tracing Log
- Physical distancing (of 2m) should be maintained between staff and visitors where possible.

Know the Symptoms of COVID-19:

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

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 and safely into a nearby bin. By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and Covid-19.

Hand Hygiene

Staff and pupils should understand why hand hygiene is important as well as when and how to wash their hands.

As a school, we will promote good hygiene and display posters throughout the schools on how to wash your hands, along with training when we return to school.

- Hand sanitiser dispensers have been positioned at the entrance doors to the school and also at the doors of each classroom and other rooms in the school.
- Hand washing facilities will be maintained in good condition and supplies of soap and towels will be topped up regularly to encourage everyone to use them.
- Each class has access to a classroom sink with both warm and cold water available.
- Posters displaying hand washing techniques and promoting hand washing will be placed on walls adjacent to washing facilities.
- Hand sanitiser is suitable for use for hand hygiene when hands are not visibly dirty.
- HSE guidelines on handwashing: <https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html>
- 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.

Physical Distancing

Physical distancing will look different across the various ages and stages of learning. As a rule, the staff in the classroom will endeavour to maintain physical distance from pupils and other staff members as much as possible.

It is also recognised that it is not always possible for staff to maintain physical distance from pupils and it is not appropriate that they would always be expected to do so where this could have a detrimental impact on the pupil i.e. if a child sustains an injury and requires first aid.

- Pupils will make their way directly to their classroom when they arrive at school each morning-no congregating in the school yard.
- Each class will enter and exit the school from a different door.
- Classes will leave the school in a staggered system so as to minimise crowding at exits. 6th class will leave first and other classes after each other.
- Collection of Junior/Senior Infants at 1.40pm will be at the school gate. Those collecting should maintain social distance.
- More info will follow explaining exact entry and exit procedures.

- Junior Infants to 2nd class do not have to adhere to physical distancing of 1m but we will distance pupils as much as possible from one another in the classrooms.
- Each class group will only mix with their own class from arrival at school in the morning until departure at the end of the school day.
- Within each class group children will sit in pod of up to 4 children. Pods will be kept at least 1m apart where possible.
- Teachers desks will be 2m from the closest pod.
- Break times and outdoor access will be staggered so as to limit the number of people on the yard. It is not possible to maintain physical distancing when pupils in primary schools play together outdoors, but in so far as practical, it is helpful to keep to consistent groups.
- Staff members who move from class to class will be limited as much as possible.
- A distance of 2m is recommended for physical distancing by adults in the school.
- Limited interaction on arrival and departure and in hallways and other shared areas. Everyone will be encouraged to walk on the left of the corridors of the school.
- Social physical contact (Hand to hand greetings, hugs) will be discouraged.
- Coat hangers will not be used. Pupils may keep their coat in their schoolbag during the day.
- We will minimise equipment sharing and will clean equipment between uses. Each pupil will be supplied with a plastic box to store their belongings at school.
- There will be an impact on certain other school activities-more details to follow.

Hygiene and Cleaning

Ballindaggin NS will follow the specific advice in relation to school cleaning, which is set out by the HPSC. Extra funding will allow for us to hire an extra cleaner along with supporting us to cover the costs of extra cleaning supplies.

- The school has been thoroughly cleaned by a professional cleaning company in preparation for reopening. All floors have been scrubbed, buffed and polished.
- Prior to the return of the children all surfaces will be disinfected with a fogging machine.
- The school will be thoroughly cleaned every day following the return to school. Cleaning will be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, hand rails, desks, chairs/arm rests, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities. Cleaning checklists will be displayed in all classrooms, offices and the staffroom.
- Classroom resources and equipment will be cleaned daily by the staff.
- A supply of gloves, masks, wipes, aprons, paper towels and other hygiene/cleaning equipment will be available in each classroom.
- Staff will wear PPE in situations where a distance of 2m cannot be maintained between them and the pupils. We will also encourage staff to wear gloves when correcting work in copies/books and when administering First Aid.

Uniform

Our school uniform is a tracksuit type uniform consisting of crested top available from Matt Mernagh in Enniscorthy. Generic navy bottoms and a generic red polo shirt can be purchased in any shop.

- Children will wear their uniforms to school.
- We understand that some parents may choose to wash their children's school clothing on a daily basis.

- We recommend purchasing at least one generic navy school jumper from Aldi/Lidl/Dunnes/Tesco or equivalent and rotating between crested top and generic navy top as needed.
- The pupils of junior/senior /first class must wear Velcro shoes.

Stationery & Books

- Extra books and workbooks have been purchased by the school this year that will be used to help 'catch up' on the work missed due to the covid-19 closure last year.
- All stationery will be provided to your child in school this year. Children will just need to bring their schoolbag, lunchbox and drink with them on a daily basis.
- Stationery provided by the school will remain in the school for the year.
- In an effort to reduce the cost of returning to school there is no additional cost to parents for these extra books, stationery and resources.

Special Educational Needs

For children with special educational needs (SEN) maintaining physical distancing in many instances will not be practical or appropriate to implement.

- Children who are unable to wash their hands by themselves should be assisted to clean their hands using soap and water or a hand sanitiser (if their hands are visibly clean) as outlined previously.
- Some children may have care needs (physical or behavioural) which requires the use of aids and appliances and/or medical equipment for example toileting aids, moving and handling equipment, respiratory equipment.

Curriculum

Our focus in terms of curriculum for the coming term will be on supporting pupils where they are at in their learning and providing them with what they need in order to flourish and be successful. Priorities in terms of curriculum will be the core subjects of English, Irish and Maths. Time will be used to revisit, consolidate and in some cases relearn curriculum content previously worked on either prior to the school closure or as part of distance learning. Homework, initially, will be limited to reading and maths tables.

Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19

A designated isolation area has been identified within the school building.

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school the following are the procedures which the school will comply with:

- If the person with the suspected case is a pupil, the parents/guardians will 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 2m away from the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2m from the symptomatic person at all times;
- Remember that the virus is spread by droplets and is not airborne so physical separation is enough to reduce the risk of spread to others even if they are in the same room;

- If it is not possible to maintain a distance of 2m a staff member caring for a pupil should wear a face covering or mask. Gloves should not be used as the virus does not pass through skin;
- 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 who will 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;
- 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.

Responsibilities for Parents:

- Parents must ensure that their child has his/her own small hand sanitiser and box of tissues which are labelled coming to school. **These must be replaced when empty.** Please buy boxes of handkerchiefs as opposed to the small packets of tissues. This is requested in an effort to ensure ready access to tissues if your child needs to cough or sneeze. It will alleviate the need to visit the classroom toilets for tissue and the classroom sanitiser dispenser for every cough and sneeze. This will in turn reduce the movement of children within the room. Hand sanitiser and small box of tissue will be stored in each child's individual box at their table.
- Parent must ensure that their child does not bring any item from home to school with them e.g toys or large stationery sets. Everything is being provided by the school. Each child will only need a lunchbox and drink bottle.
- Parents are to ensure that their child knows and uses the protocols around coughing/sneezing/use of tissues/hand sanitisers prior to returning to school.
- It is recommended that lunchboxes and drinks bottles should be wiped down before being placed into your child's schoolbag.
- Water bottles are to be filled at home. Supply your child with more than one bottle if you think they will need it.
- Children are to go to the bathroom before they leave home for school daily.
- Children are to wash their hands before leaving for school.
- Parents must not enter the school building without a prior appointment.
- A drop box will be placed outside the front door of the school to facilitate the dropping off of forgotten lunchboxes and other items.

We appreciate your cooperation with all of the above and your continued patience with the current situation.

If you have any questions or queries please contact the school directly at stcolmansnsballindaggin@gmail.com and we will respond asap.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Mc Donald', written in a cursive style.

Conor Mc Donald
Principal