

Roxboro National School

Covid-19 Response Plan



Introduction

This *Covid-19 Response Plan* is designed to support the staff and Board of Management (BOM) in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of Covid-19 in Roxboro National School.

Our Covid-19 Response Plan details the policies and practices necessary for a school to reopen as outlined in the following documents issued by the Department of Education and Skills:

- *COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of Primary and Special Schools*
- *The Roadmap for the Full Return to School*

Our plan also incorporates current advice about measures to reduce the spread of Covid-19 in schools and educational facilities issued by the HSE as outlined in their document:

- *Interim Recommendations for the reopening of schools and educational facilities*

It is important to note that any proposals and recommendations in relation to 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 NPHET, The HSE and The Department of Education continues to evolve, this protocol and the measures management and staff need to address may also change.

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

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. Procedure for Returning to Work**
- 4. Health and Safety Risk Assessment**
- 5. General advice to prevent the spread of the virus**
- 6. Supporting Pupils at “very high risk” of COVID-19**
- 7. Control Measures**
- 8. Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19**
- 9. Staff Duties**
- 10. Covid-19 related absence management**
- 11. 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.

1. Roxboro National School COVID-19 Policy

Our COVID-19 policy outlines our commitment as a school to implement the plan and help prevent the spread of the virus in our school community. 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

Roxboro National School is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our staff and a safe learning environment for all our pupils. To ensure that, we have developed the following COVID-19 Response Plan. The BOM and all school staff are responsible for the implementation of this plan and a combined effort will help contain the spread of the virus. We will:

- continue to monitor our COVID-19 response and amend this plan in consultation with our staff
- provide up to date information to our staff and pupils on the Public Health advice issued by the HSE and Gov.ie
- display information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and correct hand-washing techniques
- agree with staff, a worker representative who is easily identifiable to carry out the role outlined in this plan in relation to summer provision
- 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(s), who will be supported in line with the agreement between the Department and education partners.

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 work 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 restrictions and controls are outlined in this document.

Procedure for Returning to Work

In order to return to the workplace, staff must complete a **Return to Work (RTW)** form, which is available from the Principal.

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

The Principal will also provide details of the **Induction Training** for completion by all staff prior to the return 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 Board of Management.

There are some school staff who may be unable to return to school. Current public health guidelines have identified these people as being in groups who are defined as being at very high risk. This will be updated in line with public health advice.

People at very high risk (extremely vulnerable)

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

- are over 70 years of age - even if 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
- 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)
- have a serious heart condition **and** are pregnant

Details of the arrangements that will apply for these staff, which will be in accordance with those applying for the public service generally, will be updated by the Department of Education following consultation with management bodies and unions and a circular will issue to all schools.

3. Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representative(LWR)

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 Protocol provides for the appointment of a **Lead Worker Representative** in each workplace.

The Lead Worker Representative will work in collaboration with the employer to assist in the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of COVID -19 and monitor adherence to those measures and to be involved in communicating the health advice around COVID-19 in the workplace.

In summary, the role of the Lead Worker Representative is to:

- 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 school management 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

LWR: Aoife Brides (Teacher) **Deputy LWR**: Elaine Dooner (SNA)

The role of the Deputy LWR will be to deputise as LWR where the LWR is absent.

4. Health and Safety Risk Assessment

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment.

Staff in Roxboro National School have reviewed our emergency procedures involving, fire safety, first aid, accidents and dangerous occurrences while considering the new risks that may arise due to our school's COVID-19 Response Plan. We have updated our school's safety statement to reflect this.

A full Risk Assessment has been carried out by school staff. We have updated our school's safety statement to reflect this.

5. General advice to prevent the spread of the virus

Staff 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.

The Department of Education and Skills will ensure all updated advice is circulated to schools. Roxboro National School will arrange for this advice to be circulated to staff, pupils and visitors in a timely manner. Updated information will be communicated to our school community through email, and our school's website.

The most common respiratory symptoms of Covid-19 infection include; a high temperature, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties.

Any staff member displaying these symptoms should immediately inform the Principal teacher. They will not be permitted to attend work if they have any of the symptoms listed below:

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

Staff must inform the Principal of this situation as soon as possible.

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 Covid-19.

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.

Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with soap and water or with an alcohol-based hand sanitiser in line with the health guidance, especially after touching another person or their personal items, after using the toilet and before eating or preparing food.

Why? Washing your hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand sanitiser kills viruses that may be on your hands.

You should wash your hands:

- After coughing or sneezing
- Before and after eating
- Before and after preparing food
- If you were in contact with someone who has a fever or respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing)
- Before and after being on public transport
- Before and after being in a crowd (especially an indoor crowd)
- When you arrive and leave buildings
- If your hands are dirty
- After toilet use

6. Supporting Pupils at “very high risk” of COVID-19

The Department is conscious that there may be some pupils for whom return to school at the end of August may not be appropriate because the relevant public health guidelines indicate they are at “very high risk”.

Responsibility to ensure that these pupils receive appropriate support to engage adequately with learning remains with each school.

Good communication is key to supporting these pupils and to ensure their ongoing connection with their classmates and school community.

Additional supports will be provided for these pupils through designated teachers from within the staffing resources in our school. In Roxboro National School we will manage and redistribute our teaching support resources in order to best meet the learning needs of our pupils, including pupils at 'very high risk' to COVID-19.

Under the direction of the School Principal the designated teacher will:

- Liaise with the class teacher and special education teacher on relevant curricular content and classwork;
- Access relevant learning resources;
- Provide the pupil/student with individualised support for his/her learning;
- Increase the pupil/student autonomy, motivation, agency and wellbeing;
- Improve the pupil/student capacity to become a self-directed learner;
- Support the development of the pupil/student digital competency;
- Avail of the communication/learning platform used by the school to ensure ongoing contact with classmates and class teacher.

7. Control Measures

A range of essential control measures have been implemented in Roxboro National School to reduce the risk of the spread of Covid-19 virus and to protect the safety, health and welfare of staff, pupils, parents/guardians and visitors as far as possible within the school.

These control measures are outlined in this document.

One of the key messages to manage the risks of COVID-19 is to do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into the school.

The Department of Education has identified the following measures that will be introduced into Roxboro National School to help avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into our school.

- promote awareness of COVID -19 symptoms.
- advise staff and pupils that have symptoms not to attend school, to phone their doctor and to follow HSE guidance on self-isolation
- advise staff and pupils not to attend school if they have been identified by the HSE as a contact for person with COVID-19 and to follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement
- advise staff and pupils that develop symptoms at school to bring this to the attention of the Principal promptly
- ensure that staff and pupils know the protocol for managing a suspected case of COVID-19 in school
- everyone entering the school building needs to perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser
- visitors to the school during the day should be by prior arrangement and should be received at a specific contact point

- physical distancing (of 2 metres) should be maintained between staff and visitors where possible

The control measures shall continue to be reviewed and updated as required on an ongoing basis.

It is critical that staff, pupils, parents/guardians and visitors are aware of, and adhere to, the control measures outlined and that they fully cooperate with all health and safety requirements.

Staff, in particular, should note that they have a legal obligation under Section 13 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 to comply with health and safety requirements and to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves, their colleagues and other parties within the workplace.

The following control measures have been put in place:

i. Return to Work Form

Staff will be required to complete a RTW form at least 3 days prior to any return to the school facility (see section 2 above). The purpose of the RTW form is to get confirmation from staff that, to the best of his/her knowledge, he/she has no symptoms of Covid-19 and is not self-isolating or cocooning or awaiting the results of a Covid-19 test.

ii. 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 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.

iii. Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

It is crucial that all staff, pupils, parents/guardians, contractors and visitors are familiar with, and adopt, good hand and respiratory hygiene practices.

Guidance documentation and Information posters will be available at various locations within the school. Information posters will be prominently displayed at appropriate locations within the school including the office, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilet areas. Such are intended to inform but also remind everyone about the importance of hygiene in preventing the spread of Covid-19 virus and protecting health and safety.

Handwashing facilities and/or hand sanitisers are available at multiple locations within the school, at all exit and entry points of our school and are available in each classroom.

Use of hand hygiene facilities including wash hand basins will be managed so as to avoid congregation of people waiting to use wash hand basins and hand sanitisers. Care will be taken to clean up any hand sanitiser spills to prevent risks of falls.

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.

Frequency of Hand Hygiene

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
- before and after using shared concrete resources in pods

iv. Physical Distancing

Physical distancing measures fall into two broad categories:

- Increasing separation
- Decreasing interaction

The principle of distancing can be usefully applied in the school setting, allowing for some flexibility when needed. However, it must be applied in a practical way, recognising that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on the issue.

Increasing separation:

- All classrooms have been cleared of unnecessary furniture/shelves etc. to create maximum space
- All classrooms have been reconfigured, in line with advice from the Department of Education, in order to maximise physical distancing.

- The teacher's desk will be at least 1m and where possible 2m away from pupil desks.
- From 3rd to 6th class, a distance of 1m will be maintained between desks and individual pupils.
- Although maintaining physical distancing indoors is not a prerequisite in the first 4 years of primary school, the class teacher will make every effort to ensure physical distance is observed.

Decreasing Interaction

In order to reduce the risk of spread of infection we have structured our teachers and pupils into Class Bubbles. We will have 8 Class Bubbles. Pupils in each Class Bubble will stay apart from other Class Bubbles, to the greatest extent possible, from arrival at school in the morning until departure at the end of the school day.

The following measures have been put in place in order to achieve this.

- Upon arrival to school between 9am & 9.20am all pupils should enter the school grounds on the pre-school side (access through front gates is prohibited) and walk to the meeting point where they will be met by staff and escorted to class in small groups (of children from their Class Bubble). Physical distancing will be observed.
Classroom teachers will be in their rooms from 9am.
Junior & Senior Infants will enter through the double doors on the right hand side of the building.
1st and 2nd class pupils will enter through the double doors on the left hand side of the building.
3rd and 4th class pupils will enter through the single door on the left of the main entry way.
5th & 6th class pupils will enter through the rear double doors.
- Upon arrival, children will be escorted to class as quickly and efficiently as possible, particularly in wet weather. A shelter will be built in due course.
- Each class will have access to a designated section of the yard at each breaktime i.e. 11am & 12.30pm. Children will play only with those in their Class Bubbles. (2pm break is suspended)
- Infant pupils will be collected by their parents at the meeting point at 2pm. Socially distant markings have been provided for parents to wait. Children will be escorted to the meeting point by staff.
- Dismissal times will be staggered into 3 collection slots assigned alphabetically by family surname (with the exception of bus/after-school children). These slots will be at 3pm, 3.05pm and 3.10pm. Children will be escorted to the meeting point by staff. Parents are asked to arrive as close as possible to their designated time and to leave the car park promptly afterwards.

iv. Cleaning

Cleaning has assumed renewed importance in the context of preventing the spread of COVID-19. Arrangements for more regular and thorough cleaning of areas and surfaces within the school will be made. The HSE, the IPPN and the Department of Education have issued clear guidelines relating to cleaning and the Board of Management has a responsibility to ensure that effective and thorough cleaning routines and practices are out in place.

Regular and thorough cleaning of communal areas and frequently touched surfaces shall be conducted, in particular, toilets, sinks, door handles and communal eating areas. Cleaning will be performed regularly and whenever facilities or surfaces are visibly dirty.

In summary, each school setting will be cleaned at least once per day.

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 will 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.).

A written cleaning schedule will be available for our cleaning staff which details:

1. Items and areas to be cleaned
2. The frequency of cleaning
3. Cleaning materials to be used
4. Equipment to be used and its method of preparation
5. Written cleaning schedules will be monitored to ensure that they are adequate and are being followed.

v. Access to the school building /contact log

Access to the school facility will be in line with agreed school procedures.

Arrangement for necessary visitors such as contractors and parents/guardians will be restricted to essential purposes and limited to those who have obtained prior approval from the Principal.

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.

vi. 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
- 2m distance is not possible
- a suspected case of Covid 19 is identified while the school is in operation
- staff are particularly vulnerable to infection but are not on the list of those categorised as people in very high risk groups, or may be living with those who are in the very high risk category.

Appropriate PPE will be available for dealing with suspected COVID-19 cases, intimate care needs and for first aid. This will be updated in line with advice from the HPSC (Health Protection Surveillance Centre)

vii. First Aid/emergency procedure

The standard First Aid/Emergency procedure shall continue to apply in Roxboro National School. In an emergency or in case of a serious incident, we will call for an ambulance or the fire brigade on 112/999

8. 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 Roxboro National School will deal with a suspected case that may arise during the course of work.

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

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while at work in Roxboro National School 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.

9. 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.

10. Covid related absence management

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

11. Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

The Department recognises the need for school staff wellbeing and collective self-care. Support for school staff wellbeing will be provided by Department Support Services including the PDST and CSL, as well as by the HSE's Health Promotion Team. An Occupational Health Strategy is in place as a supportive resource for staff in schools. The

aim of the Occupational Health Strategy is to promote the health and wellbeing of employees in the workplace, with a strong focus on prevention. The Occupational Health Strategy comprises the Employee Assistance Service and the Occupational Health Service. The Employee Assistance Service(EAS) is provided by Spectrum Life under the logo of “Wellbeing Together: Folláinne Le Chéile”