



COVID-19 Response Plan for the Safe and Sustainable Operation of Presentation Primary School

Introduction

A revision of the COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable operation of Presentation Primary School was necessary to ensure that it is in compliance with the Government's Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19 and the 'Work Safely Protocol'.

In addition to being a place of learning, Presentation Primary School is also a place of work. The school has a responsibility to make every effort to ensure the safety, health and well-being of all members of our school community – children, parents and staff.

Public Health has confirmed that the infection prevention control measures in place for schools since September 2020, are still considered highly effective for risk mitigation against transmission of COVID-19. The HPSC have not advised any change in the infection prevention and control measures in the context of the new variants.

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.

School Profile

Presentation Primary School is an Urban DEIS Band 1 school with a current enrolment of 422 pupils. The staff consists of:

- Administrative Principal
- 21 Mainstream class teachers
- 2 Special Class Teachers
- 7 Special Education Teachers (SET)
- 1 Home School Liaison Teacher (HSCL)
- 5.17 SNA Posts
- Full Time Secretary (job-sharing)
- Full Time Caretaker
- 4 Cleaners

The school is made up of 3 distinct areas

- Main Building
- Small Building
- Prefabs

Procedures for Arrival and End of Day Collection/Leaving

As our school has separate buildings, we have organised the classes into the following groups.

A – Main Building Level 1	B – Small Building/Prefabs	C – Main Building Level 2
J1 – Ms. O Neill	1 st – Ms. Grant	2 nd – Ms. Mc Carthy
J1 – Ms. Houlihan	1 st – Ms Curry	2 nd – Ms. Lyons
J1 – Ms. Cullen	3 rd – Ms. Feighery	2 nd – Ms. Rellis
SI – Ms. Southard	Sp.& L. 1 – Ms. Burke	3 rd – Ms. O Dwyer
SI – Ms. Walsh	Sp.& L. 2 – Ms. Power	3 rd – Ms. Mc Ara
SI – Ms. Kavanagh	4 th – Ms. Fitzgerald	5 th – Ms. Duke
1 st -Ms. Mc Govern	5 th – Ms. Quinn	6 th – Ms. O Sullivan
4 th -Ms. O hEithir	6 th - Ms. Ivory	

Arrival at school

School will start as normal at 9am. **Doors will be opened from 8.50am.** Children will go directly to their classroom where they will be supervised. Children will not assemble in the school yard.

Group A – Children will enter the school through Door 1 in school yard (nearer door)

Group B – Children will go directly to Small Building and Prefabs

Group C – Children will enter the school through Door 2 in the school yard (at further end)

Please note the following:

- We ask that children arrive at the school from **8.50am** onwards.
- To help with reducing the amount of traffic around the school gates, children are asked to walk or cycle to school if at all possible.
- Where children are coming to school by car, we encourage parents/guardians to park further away from the school and then walk with their children to the school gate to avoid congestion.
- Parents/Guardians are asked to “Drop and Go”.
- Parents/Guardians/Children should not walk through staff carpark.
- There will be staff members (including Special Education Teachers, SNAs and Principal) available outside and inside the building to receive the children and to help them to their classrooms.
- Pupils will be supervised in their classrooms.
- Parents/Guardians **must not** enter school buildings.
- It is very important that parents/guardians respect social distancing and do not linger on school grounds.

End of School Day and Collection

There will be a staggered release of children. Children will leave from the same area as at arrival.

Parents/Guardians are asked not to linger in the interest of public health and safety.

Collection times will have to be ‘**Collect and Go**’.

Group A – Door 1 - Junior Infants/ 2nd Class/ 3rd Class

Door 2 – Senior Infants / 1st/ 4th Class

Group B – Small Building and Prefabs

Group C – Door 2 in the school yard (at further end) – 5th /6th Class

The class teacher will bring the children to their designated entrance/exit point and will release the children into the care of the adult who is there to collect them where age appropriate.

Pupils will be released at the following times:

Junior/Senior Infants - 1.30pm

First / Second Class - 2.20pm

Third /Fourth Class - 2.25pm

Fifth / Sixth Class - 2.30pm

Parents/Guardians should not congregate while waiting to collect children but adhere strictly to social distancing guidelines.

Collection of Children during the School Day

We ask that children are **not collected early** from school. If a child has to be collected for medical appointments etc., the following arrangements will apply:

- When the adult arrives at the school, they should either phone the office or use the intercom at the main reception of the school to alert the office that they have arrived.
- The child will be called through the internal PA system.
- The child will be brought from their class to the adult by a member of staff where age appropriate.
- The adult who is collecting the pupil, will be asked to sign the child out.
- No adult should enter the school building, unless invited to do so.

School Uniform

There is no guidance or advice to say that school uniforms or tracksuits should be washed every day and this is probably not practical for most families. We will follow our usual practice in relation to uniforms and tracksuits. Uniforms should be worn every day, except on P.E. days, or when otherwise requested by teachers.

As a school, we strongly advise that children should wear their school uniforms or tracksuits **only for school related activities**. Ideally, uniforms and tracksuits should be taken off straight after the child arrives home from school for the day. Wearing of uniform in after-school facilities, shops, during after-school activities, etc. should be avoided where possible.

Personal Equipment

In so far as possible, it is requested that children from 1st to 6th Class will 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.

A **school bag** will be **needed on the first day of re-opening** to bring back text books and pencil case which were used during school closure. With the exception of **5th and 6th Class**, pupils will not need a school bag on following days until directed by class teacher.

Break Times/Yard Breaks

The risk of virus transmission from contact with outside surfaces and play areas is low.

We have divided the school into three groups as outlined above and a timetable has been drawn up for access to the yard.

- There will be two yard breaks of 15 and 20 minutes daily, weather permitting.
- Each group of 8 classes will have access to the yard during their allotted break times.
- Each class will be allotted their own play area.
- Yards will be supervised by class teachers, learning support teachers and SNAs working within those bubbles

Group A	Group B	Group C
Main Building Level 1	Small Building/Prefabs	Main Building Level 2
1. 10.30am – 10.45am	1. 10.50am – 11.05am	1. 11.10 – 11.25am
2. 12.10pm – 12.30pm	2. 12.35pm – 12.55pm	2. 1pm to 1.20pm

Classroom and School Routines

Within the *Covid-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable operation of Primary and Special Schools* the Department of Education/Skills guidelines refers to classes as **Bubbles** and groups within classes as **Pods**. A Class Bubble is a grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible. The children and their teachers will work in Class Bubbles. The aim of the system within the school is that class groupings mix only with their own class from arrival at school in the morning until the children go home at the end of the school day.

Special Education Teachers (SET) and Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)

Staff members (particularly Learning Support Teachers and SNAs) can rotate between areas/classes but this will be minimized where possible. When rotation occurs, agreed sanitising routines will be observed.

In keeping with our Special Education Policy, learning support will be provided by a blended approach of in-class support and withdrawal. The provision of support will be organised to ensure our support teachers will work as far as possible, within the confines of a bubble.

- Where a support teacher is working alongside a class teacher in a classroom, both teachers must be mindful of maintaining social distance from one another.
- The tables and chairs in SET rooms will be wiped clean in between different pupils or small groups attending.

Junior Infants to Second Class

It is recognised that younger children are unlikely to maintain physical distancing indoors so there is no requirement for children from Junior Infants to Second Class to maintain a physical distance within their Class Bubble.

Third Class to Sixth Class

Children from Third Class to Sixth Class will be arranged in Pods within their Class Bubbles, with a maximum of 6 pupils per Pod. The creation of Pods within Class Bubbles is an additional measure rather than an absolute requirement.

As far as possible, each Pod will be at least 1 metre distance from the next Pod.

All unnecessary furniture will be removed from these classrooms to create as much space as possible.

Lunches

A school lunch is available to all children in the school. Fresh Today is the provider of our school lunch scheme and choices can be made through their on-line system. Children will eat their lunch in their classroom. Parents/Guardians should ensure that children not availing of the Fresh Today lunch, bring their lunches to school to avoid adults having to come to the school during the day.

Parents/Guardians should remind children not to share their food or drinks with other children.

All children must have a lunch box.

Drinking Water

Filtered drinking water is available in the school. In the interest of health and hygiene during Covid -19, teachers/SNAs will refill pupil water bottles. Sanitiser and antibacterial wipes will be provided and should be used by staff before filling bottles.

Ventilation

The Department of Education has published guidance setting out the practical steps for good ventilation in accordance with public health advice '*Practical Steps for the Deployment of Good Ventilation Practices in Schools*'. Windows should be open as fully as possible when classrooms are not in use e.g. during break-times and also at the end of each school day for a period of time.

When classrooms are in use, windows should be partially open without causing discomfort, particularly during cold weather.

Doors

Where practical, all internal doors will be left open to minimise hand contact with common surfaces.

Toilets

Each class is assigned a block of toilets and class teachers will ensure that only one class group at a time is present in the toilet block. Children who need to use the toilet more frequently will be able to do so.

Teachers will promote good hand hygiene.

Corridors and Stairwells

Briefly passing someone in a hall is very unlikely to contribute significantly to the spread of infection if people do not have physical contact and avoid informal group discussions. We will observe our usual practice of keeping to the left when on the stairs and in the corridors.

Office

Parents are asked to ring or email the office in relation to queries/ messages/concerns and avoid coming to reception as far as possible.

Email: info @presentationprimarywaterford.ie

Phone: 051-374995

Children should not be sent to office with messages as far as possible.

Parent Teacher Meetings and Communication

Meetings within the school can only happen by appointment. Contact by phone or email is the best way for parents/guardians to make such an appointment.

Each teacher has a designated email for the purpose of communication with parents/guardians during the Covid- 19 pandemic. Teachers will inform parents/guardians directly.

Please note:

- All visitors coming into the building will have to sign in and complete a contact tracing log.
- All visitors must wear a facemask for duration of their visit.

Aladdin Connect App

General school communication with parents/guardians will be sent through the Aladdin Connect App.

Please ensure you are connected. Paper copies can be made available where requested.

If you need assistance with Aladdin Connect App please contact the school office or emailing info@presentationprimarywaterford.ie

Photocopying.

Sanitiser and antibacterial wipes will be provided and should be used by staff before using the photocopier

Hygiene and Cleaning

- Sanitiser will be available at all entry and exit doors and in all classrooms. We ask that **children do not bring own sanitiser** to school to avoid the passing of containers/sharing between children.
- Warm water, soap and paper towels will be available in pupil and staff toilets.
- Hand hygiene, correct respiratory etiquette (coughing into elbow and sneezing into tissues) will be promoted and encouraged. Parents/guardians are asked to support the school in reinforcing this message at home.
- Opportunities will be timetabled throughout the day for pupils to clean their hands, apart from those times when they cough or sneeze or simply get dirty.
- The school will be cleaned **at least once per day**.
- Particular attention will be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, handrails, chairs, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities.
- All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area.
- Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day.
- Class bins will be emptied each day or more often if necessary.
- Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.)

PPE

It is now a requirement for face coverings to be worn by staff members where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres from other staff, parents/guardians, essential visitors or pupils.

Appropriate PPE will need to be used at certain work activities or work areas. These may include:

- Performing intimate care
- Administering First Aid
- Where suspected case of Covid-19 is identified during the school day
- Parent Teacher meetings

It is not recommended that children attending primary school wear a face covering.

In certain situations, the use of clear visors will be considered, e.g. staff interacting with students with hearing difficulties or learning difficulties.

Wearing a face covering or mask does not negate the need to stay at home if symptomatic.

School Activities

Shared books/library books

Pupils should have their own dedicated school books. Textbooks that are shared should be covered in a plastic covering that can be wiped with a suitable household cleaning agent between uses.

Pupils should use hand sanitiser after using shared books.

Electronics

Shared electronic devices such as tablet, touch screen, keyboard, mouse, should be cleaned between each use. Wipes are provided for this purpose.

Musical Instruments

To the greatest extent possible, instruments should not be shared between pupils and if sharing is required, the instruments should be cleaned between uses.

Choir/Singing

Singing may pose a higher level of risk and special consideration should be given to ventilation and distance between pupils.

Art

Where possible pupils should be encouraged to have their own individual art and equipment supplies.

PE

Where possible, PE should take place outdoors and use of equipment should be confined to the sets that have been distributed to class groupings. Shared equipment should be cleaned between uses by different people.

If the PE hall is being used by class groupings, common touch points will be cleaned at intervals throughout the school day. Windows should be kept open as far as possible to ensure adequate ventilation. Staff and pupils will sanitise hands on entry and exit from hall.

Shared Toys

By necessity, some classroom equipment needs to be shared e.g. 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

Soft modelling materials and play dough should be for individual use only

Extra-curricular Activities

It is not recommended that children from different bubbles would participate in extra-curricular activities at the same time. Therefore, the homework club, GAA games, art club etc. will not proceed for the foreseeable future.

Supporting the Learning of Children who cannot attend school

If a child is not able to attend school for an extended period of time, suggested activities to support the child's learning at home will be shared with parents by the class teacher and/or the learning support teacher where relevant.

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, 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.

DEALING WITH A SUSPECTED CASE OF COVID-19

Pupils or Staff should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19.

Common symptoms of Covid -19 include:

- A fever (high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above).
- a new cough - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry.
- shortness of breath or breathing difficulties.
- loss or change in your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

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

- Parents/guardians of pupils will be contacted immediately
- The child will be accompanied to the designated isolation area via the isolation route 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 at all times
- 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 or while exiting the premises
- An assessment will be made as to whether the child who is displaying symptoms can immediately be brought home by parents who call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home.
- The school will facilitate the child presenting with symptoms to remain in isolation, if they cannot go immediately home, 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 bag provided
- If the child is well enough to go home, the school will arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible, and advise them to inform their GP by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used
- If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick child is a Covid-19 suspect.
- An assessment of the incident will be carried out which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery;
- Arrangements will be made 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 and pupil confidentiality is essential at all times. School staff are encouraged to download the **HSE COVID-19 tracker app** to assist Public Health for contact tracing purposes both in and out of the school setting.

Children who should not attend school

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

- Children who have been diagnosed with Covid-19
- Children who have been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with Covid-19
- Children who have a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending
- Children who have been in contact with a person who has a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending
- Children with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school
- Children who have returned to Ireland after travelling from abroad or moved to Ireland from abroad, must self-isolate for a period of 14 days in accordance with current government guidance.
- Children who are generally unwell.

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.

Hand hygiene

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).

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. 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. In this regard and in order to facilitate a safe return to work, staff will:

- Adhere to the School COVID-19 Response Plan and the control measures outlined.
- Complete the RTW form before they return to work.
- 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.
- Complete COVID-19 Induction Training and any other training required prior to their return to school.
- Be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices.
- 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 to or attend school if they have symptoms of COVID-19 under any circumstances.
- Not return to or attend school in the event of the following:
 - if they are identified as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19
 - if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus

- If they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.
- Adhere to the procedure above If they develop any symptoms of COVID-19 whilst within the school facility.
- Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.
- Cooperate with any public health personnel and their school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice given in the event of a case or outbreak in their school
- Undergo any COVID-19 testing that may be required as part of mass or serial testing as advised by Public Health

School staff are encouraged to download the HSE COVID-19 tracker app to assist Public Health for contract tracing purposes both in and out of the school setting.

Reference Material – Updated February 2021

- Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) guidance on the re-opening of schools COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable operation of Primary and Special Schools
- Summary of additions to COVID-19 Response Plans required by 'Work Safely Protocol'
- Framework Plan for phased return of primary school education

This plan was first ratified by the Board of Management in August 2020. It was reviewed and updated on September 2020 and again in February 2021. It is **a living document** and is subject to change in accordance with updated public health guidance.

Signed: *Terence White*
Chairperson Board of Management

Date: 17/02.2021

Signed: *Anne Marie O Mara*
Principal

Date: 17/02/2021