



## COVID-19 Response Plan for the Safe and Sustainable Reopening 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 ***Recovery and Resilience: The Path Ahead*** plan 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.

The purpose of the School Covid -19 Response Plan is to provide clear and helpful guidance for the safe operation through the prevention, early detection and control of Covid -19 in school. 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 and that the current new variants of the disease do not change the infection prevention and control measures required in schools.

It is not possible to eliminate the risk of infection. However, with the co-operation, flexibility and goodwill 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.

It is important to note that this is a living document and is subject to change in accordance with updated public health guidance.

### School Profile

Presentation Primary School is an Urban DEIS Band 1 school with a current enrolment of 420 pupils approx. The staff consists of:

- Administrative Principal
- 22 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
- **5 Cleaners**

The school is made up of 3 distinct areas: Main Building, Small Building and 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
JI – Ms. O Neill	1 <sup>st</sup> – Ms. Cody	2 <sup>nd</sup> - Ms. M <sup>c</sup> Carthy
JI – Ms. Brett	1 <sup>st</sup> – Ms. Curry	2 <sup>nd</sup> – Ms. Butler
JI – Ms. Quinn	1 <sup>st</sup> – Ms. Fortune	2 <sup>nd</sup> - Ms. M <sup>c</sup> Kenna
SI – Ms. Southard	Sp.& L. 1 – Ms. Tuohy	3 <sup>rd</sup> - Ms. O Dwyer
SI – Ms. Walsh	Sp.& L. 2 – Ms. Power	5 <sup>th</sup> - Ms. O Brien
SI – Ms. Kavanagh	3 <sup>rd</sup> – Ms. Feighery	5 <sup>th</sup> – Ms. Willmott
3 <sup>rd</sup> -Ms. O Donoghue	4 <sup>th</sup> – Ms. Mullally	6 <sup>th</sup> - Ms. Duke
4 <sup>th</sup> -Ms. O hEithir	6 <sup>th</sup> – Ms. Ivory	6 <sup>th</sup> – Ms. M <sup>c</sup> Ara

**Arrival at school**

Doors will **open at 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 be '**Collect and Go**'.

**Group A** – **Door 1** - Junior Infants ( door nearest to yard entry point)  
**Door 2** – Senior Infants (at lower end of yard)

All other children will exit door assigned to their class

**Group B** – Small Building and Prefabs

**Group C** – **Door 2** in the school yard (at further end)

The class teacher will bring the children to their designated exit point where they will supervise the pupils leaving the school and/or being met by parents/guardians (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 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> 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 **5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> 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

<b>Group A</b>	<b>Group B</b>	<b>Group C</b>
<b>Main Building Level 1</b>	<b>Small Building/Prefabs</b>	<b>Main Building Level 2</b>
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 recognized, 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.

### **School Meal Scheme**

Presentation Primary School participates in the School Meal programme. A hot lunch is available to all children in the school. Fresh Today is the provider of our school meal programme 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 school meal, bring their own lunch to school and avoid adults delivering lunches during the school day.

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

### **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' (May 2021)***.

The over-arching approach in the guidance is for schools to have windows 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) and partially open when classrooms are in use. The guidance outlines that Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) monitors can play a part in providing a useful indication that areas/rooms may not be adequately ventilated. The school will use a number of these monitors throughout the school.

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](mailto:info@presentationprimarywaterford.ie)

Phone: 051-374995

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

### **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](mailto: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 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.

Public Health have recommended that pupils in 3<sup>rd</sup> class to 6<sup>th</sup> class wear a face mask/covering while attending primary school. In the limited circumstances where a cloth face mask/covering cannot be worn, clear visors may be considered.

The following categories of children are exempt on medical grounds from wearing face masks/coverings; the categories include:

- any pupil with difficulty breathing or other relevant medical conditions
- any pupil who is unable to remove the cloth face mask/covering or visor without assistance
- any pupil who has special needs and who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the cloth face mask/covering or visor

### **Wearing face masks/coverings – good practice guide**

- Regular breaks from mask wearing will be facilitated as it is recognised that wearing a face mask/covering for long durations can be challenging for young children.
- Pupils do not have to wear face masks/coverings outdoors.
- Pupils do not have to wear a face mask/covering while eating their lunch at their desks or taking a drink during class.
- Speech and Language Class pupils availing of the transport service to and from school, in this age group are not required to wear a face mask/covering but may choose to do so, where it is safe and comfortable.
- Pupils do not have to wear face masks/coverings while doing PE, playing sport, singing or playing a musical instrument
- Where the school is aware, having consulted with the parent/guardian that a child's needs are such that mask-wearing is not appropriate, no medical certification is needed.

**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 –

- Positive PCR Covid -19 test
- A child with signs of Covid-19 disease waiting for a Covid -19 PCR test or PCR test result
- A child with signs of illness that may be Covid-19, who is waiting for a doctor to assess their illness and decide if a Covid-19 test is needed
- A child who is a **household contact** of a confirmed Covid-19 case **and** is not fully vaccinated **and** has **not had** confirmed Covid-19 infection in the past nine months
- A child with signs of Covid-19 disease who should be tested but is not tested for any reason, or does not want to be tested.
- Children who are generally unwell.
- A child who has travelled to Ireland should refer to [gov.ie](https://www.gov.ie) for the most up to date advice relating to travel.

Please refer to ***Isolation quick guide for parents and guardians of children older than 3 months and up to 13 years of age.***

**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, these duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Adhere to the School COVID-19 Response Plan and the control measures outlined.
- 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.
- New staff 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.
- 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.
- Follow the HSE guidance if they are identified as a close contact.
- 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.
- If they develop any symptoms of Covid -19 whilst within the school facility, they should adhere to the procedure outlined above.
- 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

**Reference Material – Updated August 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
- Covid -19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable operation of Primary and Special Schools -V4 August 2021
- Frequently Asked Questions in relation to face masks/coverings in primary school – Dec. 2021

This plan was first ratified by the Board of Management in August 2020. It was reviewed and updated on September 2020, February 2021, August 2021 and December 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

Signed: *Anne Marie O Mara* Principal

Date: *08/12/2021*