



Waterford Educate Together National School
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Covid-19 Response Plan

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UPDATED: December 2021

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INTRODUCTION

This COVID-19 Response Plan is designed to support the staff and Board of Management of WETNS in putting measures in place that aim to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in the school environment.

The COVID-19 Response Plan details the policies and practices necessary for a school to meet the Government's 'Work Safely Protocol', to prevent the introduction and spread of Covid-19 in the school environment.

It is important that school-based teaching and learning and the operation of school facilities complies with the public health advice and guidance documents prepared by the Department. Doing so minimises the risk to pupils, staff and others. The response plan supports the sustainable operation of schools where the overriding objective is to protect the health of staff and pupils while promoting the educational and development needs of the pupils in the school. The COVID-19 response plan is a living document and will be updated in line with the public health advice as appropriate for primary and special schools.

In line with the Work Safely Protocol, the key to maintaining a safe school requires strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between the BOM, staff, pupils and parents.

The assistance and cooperation of all staff, pupils, parents, contractors and visitors is critical to the continued success of the plan.

Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information provided in this document. However, should errors or omissions be identified, please notify us so that appropriate measures can be taken to rectify same.

LIST OF REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

These following documents were reviewed in the preparation of the plan:

1. *Reopening Our Schools: The Roadmap for the Full Return to School*. Department of Educations & Skills, 27th July 2020.
2. *COVID-19: Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of Primary and Special Schools*. Department of Educations & Skills, Updated February 2021
3. *Infection Prevention and Control guidance for Early Learning and Care and School Age Childcare settings during the COVID-19 Pandemic*. HSE V1.2 30.07.2020

Other relevant websites:

www.gov.ie, www.dbei.ie, www.hse.ie, www.hpsc.ie, www.hsa.ie, www.education.ie

1. PROTOCOLS

1.1 SCHOOL DROP-OFFS

To assist with social distancing and ensure the safety of all members of the Waterford ETNS school community there will be staggered drop off and collection times for all pupils during the 2021/2022 school year. Staggered drop off and collection times will be done alphabetically according to your child's surname.

Staggered drop off times for all pupils in all classes are as follows:

Time	Surnames beginning with:
08:50 – 09:00	A – G
09:00 – 09:10	H – L
09:10- 09:20	M - Z

At drop off times we would ask all members of the school community to note the following points:

- Children will proceed directly to their classrooms via the rear of the school building.
- The rear gate will be divided in two. One half for the junior infants and SNU pupils and the other half for all other pupils.
- It is vital that pupils are dropped off and collected at their allocated times. If this is to work successfully it is vital that everyone is punctual at drop off and collection times. The children are **no longer permitted to be on the school grounds prior to their allocated drop off time** and supervision will not be present before our first drop off time at 8:50am.
- Where possible, parents are encouraged to wear a face covering at drop off and collection times. It is not recommended that pupils at primary school level wear face coverings to school. However, if a pupil feels more comfortable wearing a face covering and can do so safely the school will not discourage this.
- Members of the school staff will be located throughout the school building to assist pupils in adhering to social distancing guidelines and ensuring they reach their classrooms safely.
- Parents will not be permitted past the metal gates beside the basketball courts and students will no longer assemble in the basketball courts in the morning.
- Where possible we would encourage students to walk to school.
- Where possible we would encourage all parents to remain in their cars and not congregate around the school gates.
- Pupils from will enter the school through their allocated entrance doors.
- Signage is in place at all entrances to clearly mark who should enter at each entrance.
- We would encourage that all pupils practise good hand hygiene prior to entering the school building and sanitise their hands. Hand sanitising stations will also be located throughout the school and pupils will be required to use them throughout the day.
- While drop off and collection times are staggered please be aware that no child will miss out on any formal classroom teaching. During arrival and departure times children will be engaged in practical activities including hand hygiene, tidying, DEAR time, free-writing, mental maths, project work etc. All children will be in school for the same amount of time and those that

missed out on the opportunity to complete these activities in the morning will do so in the afternoon.

- Any request for a change in drop off time must be made in writing to principal@wetns.ie.

1.2 SCHOOL COLLECTIONS

In addition to our staggered drop off times in the morning we will also have staggered collection times for the 2021/2022 school year. To ensure all children receive the same length of time in school those who arrive first will also leave first. To assist with social distancing and ease congestion at school access points we will be using both the front and rear entrances to the school at collection times.

Collection times are as follows:

1st – 6th Class Pupils

Time	Surnames beginning with:
14:10 – 14:20	A – G
14:20 – 14:30	H – L
14:30	M - Z

Front Entrance Collection

- 6th Class M. Jean
- 3rd Class M. Claire & M. Catherine
- 1st Class M. Aoife & M. Niamh

Rear Entrance Collection

- 5th / 6th Class M. Megan
- 5th Class M. Nicole
- 4th Class M. Eve & M. Tadhg
- 2nd Class M. Marianne & M. Orla

Junior and Senior Infants

Time	Classes
13:20	Junior Infants M. Becca & M. Éilis to exit via the front door.
13:30	Senior Infants M. Carol & M. Chloe to exit via the front door.

At collection times we would ask all members of the school community to note the following points:

- At collection time we would ask all parents to please refrain from congregating at both the front and rear entrances to the school and adhere to social distancing guidelines.

- We would encourage that where possible parking closest to the school is kept free for the younger children and the older children would walk and meet their parents at their cars.
- If collecting your child from the rear entrance of the school please follow the morning guidelines and remain outside the metal gate.
- If siblings are using different exit points we recommend that you collect the youngest child first before proceeding to the other exit. Supervision will be provided while your child waits for you to get to the other exit point.
- Where possible parents are encouraged to wear a face covering at both drop off and collection times.
- Members of the school staff will be located throughout the school building at collection times to assist pupils in adhering to social distancing guidelines.
- Where possible students are encouraged to walk/ cycle to and from school.

1.3 USE OF PPE

Pupils in Junior Infants to 2nd Class:

- It is not currently recommended that pupils in Junior Infants – 2nd Class wear face coverings to school. However, if a pupil feels more comfortable wearing a face covering and can do so safely the school will not discourage this.

Pupils in 3rd – 6th Class

Please view the appendix on page 20 with full details on face coverings for 3rd – 6th Class Pupils which will be implemented from Monday 6th December.

Parents:

- We would encourage all parents to wear a face covering at drop off and collection times.

Staff:

- All staff members will be provided with masks, visors and protective screens for their protection.
- Updated Guidance from HPSC for SNA's published on 7 January 2021 recommends surgical grade masks for all SNA's. This level of PPE will be provided for all school staff.
<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/educationguidance/COVID-19%20Education%20SNA.pdf>
- Masks and visors should be donned and doffed and disposed of as demonstrated in videos available at:
[PPE - Health Protection Surveillance Centre \(hpsc.ie\)](https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/educationguidance/COVID-19%20Education%20SNA.pdf)
- Staff members should always wear a face covering where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of 2m from other staff, parents, essential visitors or pupils and when moving throughout the school building. In particular face coverings should be worn during supervision times, drop off and collection times. Staff should not touch the face covering and should wash or sanitise hands before putting on and taking off the face covering.

1.4 PUPILS WITH SYMPTOMS

Current Guidance from the Department of Education (updated August 2021) regarding symptoms which will be followed in the school:

Know the Symptoms of COVID-19

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms of coronavirus (which includes the DELTA variant).

Common symptoms of coronavirus 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
- Fatigue
- Aches and Pains

Other uncommon symptoms of coronavirus include:

- sore throat
- headaches
- runny or stuffy noses
- feeling sick or vomiting
- diarrhoea

It can take up to 14 days for symptoms to show. They can be similar to symptoms of cold and flu.

If you have any symptoms of COVID-19 (coronavirus), self-isolate and phone your family doctor straight away to see if you need a free COVID-19 test.

Getting an early diagnosis means, you can get the help you need and take steps to avoid spreading the virus, if you have it.

For the complete list of symptoms, please refer to the HSE Website. Symptoms may be subject to change so regular review of the HSE Website is advised. If you do not have symptoms, you can get a free COVID-19 (coronavirus) test at a COVID-19 walk-in test centre.

How to Minimise the Risk of Introduction of COVID-19 into Schools:

- Staff / Pupils with symptoms listed above should not attend school, parents of pupil / staff member should phone their doctor and follow HSE guidance on self-isolation;
- Staff and pupils should self-isolate or restrict their movements at home if they display any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 and contact their family doctor to arrange a test
- Staff and pupils should follow the HSE advice if they are a close contact of a suspected/ confirmed case of Covid-19.
- If you have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff and pupils are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.
<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/77952-government-advice-on-international-travel/#travelling-to-ireland>

The following outlines how Waterford ETNS will deal with a suspected case that may arise during the course of the school day.

The school hall has been designated the **isolation area** and will be used should a suspected case of Covid-19 arise. The **SNU isolation area** is located beside the staff toilets near the exit door. In the event of multiple cases of Covid-19 the four corners of the hall will be designated as separate isolation areas. If further space is required learning support rooms will be used as additional isolation areas.

If a pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while in Waterford ETNS the following are the procedures to be implemented:

- The parents/guardians will be contacted immediately.
- The pupil will be isolated immediately in the designated isolation area.
- Each classroom will have a Covid Pack containing gloves, masks and other relevant items. A disposable mask will be given to the pupil presenting with symptoms as soon as possible and will remain on until the pupil has exited the building (Please see Covid-19 Response Plan for Reopening of Schools 5.5 Use of PPE p22 for exceptions).
- If a teacher feels that a pupil requires isolation they should contact the school secretary (Ext: 100), the school principal (Ext: 150) or deputy principal (Ext: 120) to arrange for a member of staff to bring the child to the isolation area.
- The member of staff who will be accompanying the child to the isolation area must get a Covid pack from beside the photocopier before going to the child.
- The pupil will be guided to the designated isolation area by a member of school staff via the shortest available route.
- The designated guide should maintain a social distance from the symptomatic person and also make sure that others maintain a social distance from the symptomatic person at all times.
- Once the child has been collected by their parents/ guardians the staff designated guide should inform the school caretaker so that the area can be cleaned and the Covid pack used sanitised and quarantined for a one week period.

- If the pupil is well enough to go home, they should be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible and their general practitioner should be informed by parents 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, parents should contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a Covid-19 suspect.
- The principal will be responsible for ensuring that all aspects of the protocol to deal with suspected cases have been adhered to. An assessment of the incident by the principal should be carried out which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery.
- Appropriate cleaning will be arranged for the isolation area and work areas involved.
- The parents/guardians will fill in the Return to School Declaration form on Aladdin before the child returns to school.

Special Educational Needs

For children with SEN, maintaining physical distancing in many instances will not be practical or appropriate to implement. 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.

Children who are unable to wash their hands by themselves should be assisted to clean their hands using soap and water or hand sanitiser.

The school will be following Government guidelines when dealing with *suspected* cases of Covid-19.

If a case is *confirmed* the HSE will inform any staff/parents (this may take place with help of the school) 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 confidentiality is essential at all times.

1.5 STAFF WITH SYMPTOMS

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:

1. 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.
2. All staff should co-operate with any public health officials and the school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice in the event of a case or outbreak in the school.
3. Coordinate and work with their colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained.
4. Make themselves aware of the symptoms of Covid-19 and monitor their own wellbeing.

5. Self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any symptoms of Covid-19.
6. Must not return or attend school if:
 - a. if they are identified by the HSE as a close contact of a confirmed case of Covid-19
 - b. if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus,
 - c. 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.
7. If they develop any symptoms of Covid-19 whilst within the school facility, they should remove themselves from the school building immediately and seek guidance from their doctor. If they are unable to leave the school immediately they should adhere to the procedure outlined above and wait in the designated isolation area until they can be collected.
8. Complete the 'Return To Work' form before they return to work and return this form to the principal and also confirm that the details have not changed following periods of closure such as school holidays.
9. 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.
10. Must complete Covid-19 Induction Training and any other training required prior to their return to school. [gov.ie - Training for reopening schools \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)
11. Must be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices.
12. Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.
13. Undergo any Covid-19 testing that may be required as part of mass or serial testing or outbreak in the school
14. Should download the HSE Covid-19 tracker app to assist Public Health for contact tracing purposes both in and out of the school setting

1.6 PARENT MEETINGS

Effective communication between parents and school staff is vital to the success of all pupils. To reduce the number of people entering the school building and to help keep all members of our school community safe, meetings between parents and staff members will be facilitated digitally. We would ask all parents to note the following guidelines:

- For the 2021/2022 school year all enquiries should be made via the teacher's email. Teacher's email addresses are available on the school website here: <http://wetns.ie/staff-contacts/>
- Please make contact with your child's teacher via their school email address with any queries, questions or concerns that you may have. If required, a meeting can be facilitated over the phone between parents and teachers.
- If, following emails and phone calls you feel that a face to face meeting is required requests must be made in writing to the school principal.
- Please note that contact with SNA's should be made through the class teacher.

Parent Teacher Meetings Update

- The school will take guidance from the Department of Education in relation to Parent Teacher Meetings for 2021/2022. WETNS will communicate the details of how meetings will be held as soon as guidance is issued.

1.7 SCHOOL CLEANING

As per Government Guidelines cleaning of the school building will take place each day. In addition extra cleaning equipment will be made available to both staff and pupils.

To assist with the cleaning of classrooms each pupil will be provided with a plastic box for their belongings. This should be brought in to school on the first day with all books and stationery.

The HPSC School cleaning guidelines will be followed in the school.

1.8 THIRD PARTY VISITS

Third party visits will be by appointment only and will be approved on a case by case basis. Where possible, meetings will take place outside school opening times and will be conducted in accordance with physical distancing guidelines.

The school office will be closed to all non-essential visitors and contact should be made via phone (051 355 714) or email (admin@wetns.ie).

2. WORKS TO BUILDING

2.1 SUBDIVISION OF YARD

To facilitate classes remaining in their bubbles during break times the school yard will be split into 8 smaller playgrounds. The yard will be split as follows:

Playground	Location
1	Infant yard Half A
2	Infant yard Half B
3	Infant yard in front of the bike shelters
4	Basketball court A
5	Basketball court B
6	Carpark A
7	Carpark B
8	Carpark C

- Each class will be assigned to a playground.
- Initially the playgrounds will be divided using traffic cones to allow for changes if required.

To assist pupils social distancing when lining up markings will be on the ground in the yards. These markings will help pupils keep a social distance and may also be used at collection times.

2.2 SIGNAGE

Signage will be in place throughout the school as appropriate.

Signage will include the following:

- Floor markings to highlight social distancing.
- Posters on handwashing in bathrooms.
- Signposts in the yard to guide children in their classrooms in the morning.

2.3 HAND SANITISERS

Hand hygiene is one of the most important factors in reducing the spread of Covid-19. Staff and pupils should wash their hands or use hand sanitiser:

- When entering and exiting vehicles
- When entering and exiting school buildings
- Before eating or drinking
- After using the toilet
- After playing outdoors
- When hands become dirty

Children in Junior Infants to Second Class are not advised to bring their own hand sanitiser to school as it can be a health and safety risk. It is encouraged that pupils from 3rd to 6th Class would bring their own hand sanitiser to school and use it throughout the day.

Hand sanitising stations will also be located throughout the school at the following locations:

- All entrances to the school.
- All classroom doors.
- All support room doors.
- Teachers will also have portable hand sanitising stations.
- Alcohol based sanitiser must not be stored or used near heat or naked flame.

2.4 CLASSROOMS

Each class is an individual *Bubble* and within these *Bubbles* will be smaller groups called *Pods*. These *Pods* and *Bubbles* will operate in line with Government Guidelines.

Suggested classroom layouts have been created specifically for our school and are available to all teachers. In each classroom a 2 metre area across the front of the classroom will be marked for the teacher. This area will be kept free for the teacher and will include the teachers table and whiteboard.

Where possible in 3rd to 6th Class social distancing of 1 metre will be maintained between individual pupils. Where this is not possible pupils will be seated in *pods* and 1 metre distance will be maintained between each *pod*.

Staff should maintain a minimum of 1m distance and where possible 2m. They should also take measures to avoid close contact at face to face level such as remaining standing rather than sitting beside/crouching down. 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 a pupil i.e. if a child sustains an injury and requires first aid.

Ventilation

The Department 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'. The guidance sets out an overall approach for schools that windows should be open as fully as possible when classrooms are not in use (e.g. during break-times or lunch-times (assuming not in use) and also at the end of each school day) and partially open when classrooms are in use. The guidance provides that good ventilation can be achieved in classrooms without causing discomfort, particularly during cold weather. Children are encouraged to wear extra layers of clothing if desired.

2.4.1 Screens for Teachers Desk

Screens have been installed in all classrooms and mobile screens are available for use by Special Education Teachers.

2.4.2 SNA Screens

Mobile screens will be available for use by SNA's.

2.4.3 Hand Sanitiser Unit

Hand sanitising stations will also be located throughout the school.

3. CLEANING PLAN

3.1 CLASSROOMS

3.1.1 In-Class Cleaning

The classroom will be cleaned by the school cleaners at the end of each school day in accordance with HSPC guidelines.

Tables and chairs must be left clear to facilitate this. Each pupil will receive a box for their school equipment.

Teachers will be responsible for their teaching area and will receive cleaning supplies to assist with this.

Special Education Teachers will also receive cleaning supplies to ensure teaching resources and areas are cleaned between teaching sessions.

It is the responsibility of all members of our school community to help keep our school clean and safe.

3.1.2 Common Areas

The common areas will be cleaned by the school cleaners throughout each school day in accordance with HSPC guideline.

4. D: COMMUNICATION PLAN

4.1 TEACHERS

Teachers will receive communication from the school via their school email addresses and WhatsApp.

4.2 PARENTS

Aladdin Connect is the main form of communication from the school to parents.

The school website will also be used for updates.

Where required written communication will also be used.

4.3 THIRD-PARTIES

Through the school office.

5. STAFF MANAGEMENT

5.1 Training

Induction training is available for all staff members at the link below.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/dd7fb-induction-training-for-reopening-schools/>

5.2 Lead Worker Representatives

Lead Worker Representative: Patrick Hennessey

Deputy Lead Worker Representative: Becca Mac Sweeney

Assistant Lead Worker Representative: Lisa Barrett

6. HEALTH & SAFETY – RISK ASSESSMENT

The school Health & Safety Risk Assessment has been updated to reflect Covid-19 requirements.

6.1 Changes to Health and Safety Plan

The school Health & Safety Plan has been amended in light of Covid-19.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1: Return to Work Form

This questionnaire must be completed by staff **at least 3 days** in advance of returning to work.

If the answer is Yes to any of the below questions, you are advised to seek medical advice before returning to work.

Name: _____

Name of School: _____

Name of Principal: _____ Date: _____

	Questions	YES	NO
1.	Do you have symptoms of cough, fever, high temperature, difficulty breathing, loss or change in your sense of smell or taste now or in the past 14 days?		

2.	Have you been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection in the last 14 days?		
3.	Are you awaiting the results of a Covid-19 test?		
4.	In the past 14 days, have you been in contact with a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of Covid-19?		
5.	Have you been advised by a doctor to self-isolate at this time?		
6.	Have you been advised to restrict your movements at this time?		
7.	Have you been advised to cocoon at this time? Note: If you're at very high risk (extremely vulnerable) from Covid-19 you may be advised to cocoon.		

I confirm, to the best of my knowledge that I have no symptoms of COVID-19, am not self-isolating or awaiting results of a COVID-19 test and have not been advised to restrict my movements.

Please note: The school is collecting this sensitive personal data for the purposes of maintaining safety within the workplace in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The legal basis for collecting this data is based on vital public health interests and maintaining occupational health and this data will be held securely in line with our retention policy.

Signed: _____

Appendix 2: Waterford ETNS Checklist for Staff

This HSA checklist has been adapted to help School Leaders, In-school Management Teams and BoMs prepare for School Staff return to school in a way that will help prevent the spread of Covid-19. School leaders and staff must work together to protect everyone in the school Further information can be found at www.Gov.ie , www.hse.ie , www.hpsc.ie and www.hsa.ie			
	Control	Yes / No	Action needed
1.	Do you feel well and fit enough to return to school?		
2.	Are you keeping up to date with the latest COVID-19 advice from Government?		
3.	Are you aware of the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 ?		
4.	Do you know how the virus is spread ?		
5.	Have you completed Back to School Questionnaire for Staff Members and given it to your Principal?		

6.	Have you told your Principal if you fall into any of the at-risk categories ?		
7.	Have you been given an induction before returning to work and made aware of the control measures the BOM has put in place to minimise the risk of you and others being exposed to COVID-19? (See Checklist No. 2 Control Measures) ?		
9.	Have you co-operated with the BOM to make sure these control measures are maintained?		
10.	Do you know who your Staff Representative is and how to contact him / her?		
11.	Do you know how to contact your Staff Representative if you have any concerns about exposure to COVID-19, control measures not been maintained or have any suggestions that could help prevent the spread of the virus?		
12.	Do you know what to do in relation to physical distancing, good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette?		
13.	Do you know how to wash your hands properly?		
14.	Do you know when to wash your hands: i.e. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • before and after eating and preparing food • after coughing or sneezing • after using the toilet • before smoking or vaping • where hands are dirty • before and after wearing gloves • before and after being on public transport • before leaving home • when arriving/leaving the workplace/other sites • after changing tasks • after touching potentially contaminated surfaces • if in contact with someone displaying any COVID-19 symptoms 		
15.	Do you know where your nearest hand washing / hand sanitising stations are?		
16.	Do you know to avoid touching your face?		
17.	Do you know to keep 2 metres physical distancing from others at all times while at school, including in the staffroom or bathroom?		
18.	Do you know to avoid any physical contact with colleagues, parents or visitors?		
19.	Do you know what to do if you start to develop symptoms of COVID-19 while at work, including where the isolation area is? (See Checklist No. 4)		
20.	Do you understand the purpose of giving your employer any necessary information to maintain a COVID-19 contact log?		
21.	Do you understand any proposed new staff rosters, changing of start / finish times, rostering of breaks , wet-day supervision, etc.?		

22.	Have you been made aware of any changes to risk assessments relevant to your work activities and any changes in the safety statement in response to controls to minimise the risk of you and others being exposed to COVID-19?		
23.	Have you been made aware of any changes to the emergency plans or first aid procedures for your workplace in response to controls to minimise the risk of you and others being exposed to COVID-19?		
24.	Do you know to avoid sharing items such as cups, bottles, cutlery, pens etc.?		
25.	Have you been made aware that any personal items brought into work must be cleaned and to avoid leaving them down on communal surfaces or to clean the surface after the personal item is removed?		
26.	Have you been provided with cleaning materials, including gloves and disinfectant to clean your own workspace twice daily?		
27.	Do you know to clean your hands before and after using public transport when commuting and when you enter and exit the workplace?		
28.	Do you know when you have to wear PPE, where and how it is stored and how to fit, use, remove, clean, store and dispose of any required PPE?		
29.	Do you know what supports are available to you if you are feeling anxious or stressed?		
Additional Information			

APPENDIX 3

Waterford ETNS Return to School Parental Declaration Form

This form is available on Aladdin Connect and must be completed by a child's Parent/ Guardian prior to their return to Waterford ETNS following an absence or following case of suspected Covid-19.

Appendix to WETNS Covid-19 Plan

Face Coverings 3rd – 6th Class Pupils

2nd December 2021

1. What is the change in primary schools in relation to the wearing of face coverings?

A decision was taken by Government on 30 November 2021, that face coverings should be worn by pupils in 3rd – 6th Class in primary schools.

2. How can I engage with the school to discuss any concerns I may have as a parent or if I wish to discuss an exemption?

We understand the difficulties that these changes may bring for pupils, parents, and staff at this time. We encourage and welcome Parents/Guardians to contact the school principal – Jenny (principal@wetns.ie) to discuss any queries or concerns that you may have in relation to face coverings or exemptions.

WETNS School staff will support the children to ensure that they can participate and communicate effectively in class whilst wearing the face coverings. We will continue to put the children's wellbeing at the centre of everything we do whilst implementing the current Public Health Measures.

We would ask all members of our school community, to be mindful that some children and adults present with *invisible* disabilities and additional needs, therefore you may not know this from meeting or interacting with a person.

As a school, we are aware of our own pupil's specific needs and will not be in a position to discuss exemptions for pupils with anyone other than the child's own parents/guardians. To support all in our community, we would ask everyone to show kindness and understanding to pupils, parents, and staff members at this time.

3. When does this come into effect?

The requirement for the wearing of face coverings will be implemented at WETNS from Monday December 6th.

4. How long will this requirement last?

The information issued to schools from the Dept of Education states that the measure is a temporary measure and will be subject to review in mid-February 2022.

5. Who does the wearing of face coverings apply to?

The Dept of Education has advised that pupils in 3rd – 6th Classes should wear a face covering in school. However, there are some exemptions to this requirement as outlined in Question 6 below.

6. What are the exemptions to the wearing of face coverings?

The DE has set out three categories of exemptions to the requirement to wear a face covering. These include:

- any pupil with difficulty breathing or other relevant medical conditions
- any pupil who is unable to remove the cloth face-covering or visor without assistance
- any pupil who has special needs and who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the cloth face covering or visor, for example pupils with intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, sensory concerns or tactile sensitivity.

7. How does the school get confirmation that a pupil falls into a category for exemption?

The vast majority of **exempted** children will not require medical certification to receive an exemption from wearing a face covering. The school will be familiar with the pupils needs and are well placed to identify those children whose complex needs mean the wearing of a face covering may not be possible. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to contact the school principal Jenny (principal@wetns.ie) to discuss any queries or concerns around exemptions.

8. How often must the child wear the face covering during the day?

It is expected that children will wear the face covering for the duration of the full school day with the exceptions outlined below.

9. Can a face covering be removed for break time e.g. taking a drink, eating lunch?

A common-sense approach will apply at WETNS. The removal of face coverings for brief periods for the consumption of snacks, taking of water/beverages and post meal hygiene will be facilitated.

10. Can the mask be removed when the pupils go to the yard for play time?

Yes, the face covering can be removed for play time on the yard.

11. Can the mask be removed for P.E. or other sporting activities?

Yes. P.E. currently takes place outside so masks can be removed during this time.

12. Can the mask be removed for music e.g. singing?

Yes. A practical approach will be taken. Consideration will be given to the space available and the ventilation measures in place. Distance between the pupils will be maximised.

13. If a child forgets or damages his/her face covering will the school provide him/her with one?

Yes. The class teacher will supply a mask to a pupil who may forget or damage their face covering.

14. Should a pupil be assisted with his/her face covering?

It is expected that pupils from this age cohort (3rd class and above) should be able to put on and remove their own face coverings without assistance.

15. What are the directions for effective use of face masks/coverings?

Advice on how to use face coverings properly can be found at this link here: [gov.ie - When to wear face coverings and how to make them \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)

Important Advice when using Face Coverings:

- All pupils should be reminded not to touch the face covering and to wash or sanitise their hands (using hand sanitiser) before putting on and after taking off the face covering.
- Face masks/coverings should be stored in a designated space, for example, in an individually labelled container or bag.
- Cloth face coverings should be washed after every day of use and/or before being used again, or if visibly soiled.
- Face masks/coverings should not be worn if they are wet. A wet cloth face covering may make it difficult to breathe.
- Parents should be advised that they obtain face masks for their children which fit properly and are comfortable for the child to wear.

We thank everyone in our school community for your continued efforts to keep everyone safe during these difficult times.