



Waterford Educate Together National School

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Covid-19 Response Plan

UPDATED: August 2022

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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.hpssc.ie, www.hsa.ie, www.education.ie

1. PROTOCOLS

1.1 SCHOOL DROP-OFFS

WETNS will return to school opening time of 8:50am for all pupils for 2022/2023 School Year.

Supervision will be provided on both yards (Basketball Court and Yard closest to School Building) from 8:40am. Children from Junior Infants – Second Classes will assemble in the Basketball Court and Pupils from 3rd -6th Classes will assemble in Yard closest to school building. Parents may accompany and wait with children in the Junior Classes only in the Basketball Court.

1.2 SCHOOL COLLECTIONS

WETNS will return to school collection time of 1:30pm for Infants and 2:30pm for all pupils in 1st- 6th Classes.

Collection Points for Each Class:

Front Entrance Collection

- Junior and Senior Infants (1:30pm)
- 6th Class M. Niamh & M. Tadhg
- 3rd Class M. Claire & M. Cora
- 1st Class M. Aoife & M. Sasha

Rear Entrance Collection

- 4th/5th Class M. Megan
- 5th Class M. Carol
- 4th Class M. Marianne
- 2nd Class M. Fiona & M. Bevin

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

- 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 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 students are encouraged to walk/ cycle to and from school.

1.3 USE OF PPE

All Pupils

- Pupils are not required to wear a face covering during the school day. However, any pupil who feels more comfortable wearing a face covering, may do so safely and the school will not discourage this.

Staff:

- Staff members can choose to wear masks, visors and use protective screens for their own protection.
- 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/hpsc/HealthProtection/HealthProtection/PPE/PPE-HealthProtectionSurveillanceCentre.aspx)

1.4 PUPILS WITH SYMPTOMS

Current Guidance from the HSE regarding symptoms which will be followed in the school:

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/covid19/symptoms/symptoms-child/>

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

- Staff and pupils should follow the current HSE advice if they have symptoms 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 school day.

The school hall and outside the principal's office has been designated the **isolation areas** 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 school office 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.
- 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.

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.

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 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 where possible.
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 follow up to date Public Health Advice in relation to self-isolation and restricted movement.
7. If they develop any symptoms of Covid-19 whilst within the school facility, they should remove themselves from the school building immediately and follow public health advice. 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. Must be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices.
9. Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.
10. Undergo any Covid-19 testing that may be required as part of mass or serial testing or outbreak in the school

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 continue to be facilitated digitally where possible. We would ask all parents to note the following guidelines:

- For the 2022/2023 school year all enquiries should be made initially 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, a request may be made to arrange a meeting.
- Please note that contact with SNA's should be made through the class teacher.

Parent Teacher Meetings Update

- Parent/Teacher meetings will take place in the school building on the dates listed on the WETNS School Calendar for 2022/2023 unless otherwise advised by the Dept of Education.

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 1st-6th Class will be provided with a plastic box for their belongings. This should be brought 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.

Appointment should be made through the school office via telephone (051 355 714) or email (admin@wetns.ie).

2. WORKS TO BUILDING

2.1 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.

2.2 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.

2.3 CLASSROOMS

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

Where requested, screens have been installed in 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 are 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 guidelines.

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: 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.