

Please note this is a live document which will be updated and amended in line with HSE and DES advice

Introduction

The purpose of this plan is to outline the School Policy on the steps and processes taken by Wicklow Educate Together NS to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in the school for our pupils and for our staff. This plan is in conjunction with the Department of Education and Skills Covid-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of Primary and Special Schools

<https://assets.gov.ie/82063/f53cc783-ed0a-4e55-bac0-18133323e90d.pdf>

The school is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our staff and pupils. To ensure this, we have developed the following plan to ensure the safety of all. All staff, pupils and families are responsible for the implementation of this plan and a combined effort is required to help contain the spread of the virus.

Underlying Principles

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. This plan has been formulated to better ensure that the school can exercise that duty of care.

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 the school and the consequent risk of its spread.

As well as co-operation, the flexibility, honesty and goodwill of all will be required to ensure the plan can be implemented.

Preparing your child for school

- Practise washing hands properly with soap for at least 20 seconds. Make sure your child knows how to dry their hands thoroughly.
- Children should know how to use hand-sanitiser correctly, and that it should not be ingested.
- Teach your child correct coughing etiquette. Cough or sneeze into a tissue, or into your elbow if you do not have a tissue. Put the tissue into the bin and wash or sanitise your hands.
- Make sure your child can independently open and close their lunchbox and bottle, their coat and their shoes. No shoes with laces for younger children.
- Please ensure all of your child's clothing lunch box and reusable drinks bottle are labelled clearly with your child's name as equipment cannot be shared.

Please note the following terminology and what it means

Bubble

- All children return to school and classes will operate within a bubble system (your child's class is called a bubble)
- We have 19 bubbles in WETNS. Pupils will remain in their class bubble. They will attend support teaching (if applicable) with pupils from their class bubble or support teaching will take place 'in class' (within the bubble). We will ensure there is as little contact as possible between children in different bubbles during school time.

- Children attending our classes for children with additional needs will be included in a pod in their mainstream class, as well as their own class bubble. Reverse integration will only take place outdoors.

Pod

- Within each class bubble from Junior Infants to 6th class, the children will be further divided into pods (a pod is a group of pupils who will sit together, complete group work together and play together on yard)
- A distance of 1 metre should be maintained between pods, where possible.
- Pods will not contain more than six pupils.
- On the yard and in outdoor PE pupils may mix with pupils from other pods within their own bubble.
- In accordance with normal practice the teacher will decide which children sit in each pod.
- Pods will be reviewed at the end of every month

The school's physical environment: building and outdoor areas

- All outdoor areas will be utilised to their fullest in order to maximise outdoor spaces as learning environments. For example the school yard play area, the top field (weather dependent), the school garden and the outdoor classroom
- The school yard play area has been 'discretely' divided into zones for bubbles to play in and hop scotch, counting snakes etc have been painted onto the surface
- Each bubble will have a 'bubble bag' of appropriate play equipment and resources to utilise at playtimes
- Aistear will take place, as far as is practicable, outdoors for example the construction site, the garden centre etc
- Hand sanitiser will be available at all entry / exit points in the building, and in all classrooms, support rooms, offices, copiers and staffroom.
- Four outdoor wash hand basins (temperature correct hot water) have been installed at four areas in the school yard play area for the pupils to wash their hands following outdoor activity
- Each classroom has 2 toilets with wash hand basins for pupil use with lidded pedal bin for used paper towel
- Each room in the school has a bin for recyclable paper and card and a lidded pedal bin for landfill waste

Induction Training All new staff members undergo staff training led by the Lead Workers Representative. All class teachers provide training for their pupils in an age appropriate manner

Arriving at and departing from school There are 3 points of entry to the school, by pedestrian at Rocky/Hawkstown Road junction gate, pedestrian at the main gate (left hand pedestrian gate) and vehicular (set down only) at the main gate. These areas can be accessed by pupils from 8.40-9.00

- There will be two staggered departure times for infants 1.10 and 1.20. And for all other pupils 2.10 and 2.20. (school will assign times accordingly)
- Children arriving by bus remain on timetable as of previous years in line with school transport (Bus Eireann)
- Arrival and departures will be supervised by school staff at all entry/exit points and at intervals on routes and at set down. Morning arrival access to the school grounds is for staff and pupils only. Those arriving as pedestrians, by bicycle etc use the 2 pedestrian gates, those arriving by

vehicle (bus and car) access the set down area via the main vehicular gate. At pupil departure times the campus can be accessed by parents/guardians.

The following expectations arise

- Pupils do not congregate in any area, they move along their route to their classroom
- The class teachers will be in the classroom ready to supervise the pupils from 8.40
- Class will begin at 9.00 -In the period from 8.40-9.00 the pupils will engage in independent, structured activities such as reading, colouring or puzzles/jigsaws. No formal teaching will take place in this 20 minute period.
- Each pupil must sanitise their hands before entering the building.
- We ask for co-operation in ensuring pupils are not dropped to the school prior to 8.40 or after 9.00. Prior to 8.40 pupils will not be permitted to enter the school grounds.
- We ask that families please depart the school grounds promptly at collection times, and to maintain 2m social distance at all times. All adults continue to wear face coverings while on school premises

Yard Arrangements Each class will continue to have two outdoor recreation breaks per day. 40 minutes will be timetabled to these breaks to include time for entry to and exit from the building, and initially both breaks will be of 20 minute duration each. Each class will remain within its bubble for the duration of the yard break for all classes. The space allocated to each class will be much larger to facilitate more social distancing whilst also allowing the children more room to move and play freely in their different ways. In addition, "Bubble Bags" of equipment will be brought to the yard for each class to use under supervision. This equipment will be specific to each class and will not swap over. To attempt to prevent any major crowding or crossing over between bubbles at entry and exit points, yard times will be staggered. Children will be supervised on the yard as normal and usual yard rules, rewards and sanctions will apply. In line with other procedures, this will be reviewed for successes and areas needing improvement regularly and the plan for yard adjusted accordingly.

Ventilation Please note the following best practice from DES ventilation guidelines

- Ventilating the rooms fully for 15 minutes in the afternoons
- The following day the room doesn't need full ventilation for the first period/class
- Full ventilation whenever leaving the room
- Full ventilation when children return to the room from a break
- Doors to classrooms do not have to be open fully at all times
- Appropriate ventilation of staff room
- Back doors to yard are kept closed as far as is practicable
- All classrooms have a CO2 monitor, if the reading goes above 1400 ventilation needs to be increased. The standard rate of high CO2 levels is 800.

Access to parents/guardians Parents/guardians are only permitted onto the school grounds at collection times. No parent/guardian should enter the school building, unless invited to do so.

Visitors to the school There are no toilet facilities at the school for other adults or children, these are designated for the pupils and staff of the school. All visitors entering the building will be required to complete contact tracing information.

Collecting a child from school during the school day For urgent situations only, for example, a medical or professional appointment, a critical family reason. Please email info@wicklowetns.com outlining who will collect and exact times of collection and return times (if applicable)

The child will be brought from their class to the adult at the front reception by a member of staff. Office staff will record the collection time of those pupils leaving early.

Dropping off items during the school day We ask parents/guardians and pupils to be vigilant this year in ensuring all required items are brought to school in the morning –lunches, drinks, and coats. If an essential item must be dropped to school during the school day please email info@wicklowetns.com or telephone the office 0404 62786 detailing what needs to be dropped off. Please advise the member of staff you are speaking to via the phone what item you are leaving and the child it is for. Once the office is aware of the forgotten item, please deposit the forgotten item/s in the box under the post box outside front reception.

Communication Procedure

- All correspondence will be sent to parents by text/app message or email.
- Messages for teachers can be sent by phoning/emailing the school office utilising info@
- If a parent/guardian needs to speak with a teacher or vice-versa, best practice is to do this by an arranged phone call.
- Appointments in the school building will be kept to an absolute minimum and will only take place by prior arrangement through the office
- Phone calls and meetings with your child's teacher can also be arranged by email or phone call to the office.
- If information needs to be given to the teacher during the school day please contact the school office by phone or by email

DEALING WITH A SUSPECTED CASE OF COVID-19

NB: Pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19. The symptoms of Covid -19 are <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a04fc-advice-for-students-and-their-families/#health-advice-for-parents>

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

- Parents/guardians of that child will be contacted immediately—it is the parents' responsibility to ensure we have up to date contact details for you on Aladdin Connect. In addition to parent/guardians contact details, we should also have contact details for 1-2 Emergency Contacts who live locally and will be in a position to collect your child if you cannot. You can enter these on your Aladdin Connect Profile.
- The child will be accompanied to the designated isolation area 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.
- An assessment will be made as to whether the child who is displaying symptoms can immediately be brought home by parents who will then 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 immediately go home.
- 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 will 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.

- 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.

Designated Isolation area: The School has allocated a designated isolation area in the event a pupil or staff member develops symptoms of COVID-19 while at School. This space is easily accessible, well ventilated.

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 with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school—if your child falls into this category please contact the school to inform us of this so arrangement can be made.
- Children who are awaiting the result of a covid test
- Children who have received a negative covid test but who still have symptoms (children must be symptom free for 48 hours before returning to school)
- Children who are generally unwell
- Children who are in self-isolation due to travel to a country that the government has listed as an 'at risk' location
- Families are requested to contact the school prior to sending children back to school following an illness of any type.

Supporting the Learning of Children who cannot attend school If a child is not able to attend school for an extended period of time (very high-risk pupil), the class teacher (and/or support teacher, where relevant) will share suggested activities to support the child's learning at home with parents.

Impact of a Confirmed Case of Covid-19 in a Class If the school is notified that a pupil has a confirmed case of Covid-19 the school will endeavour to provide the school community with an update provided that explicit parental consent has been provided. The school will not share personal information.

Clothing and footwear Pupils will wear comfortable clothes to school, suitable for outdoor, physical activity, and well-ventilated rooms in all seasons. Pupils will bring a water proof jacket with a hood and wear appropriate footwear for outdoor/physical activity. All items named please.

Personal Protective Equipment All staff will wear face coverings. Staff will also wear aprons/gloves, as appropriate, for intimate care situations and administering some first aid

Pupils are not expected, under current guidelines, to wear a face covering to school. If, however a family chooses for their child to do so please adhere to the following guidance

- Please ensure that your child understands that they would wear the covering for a lengthy period
- They will need to remove, and safely store it at eating times
- Please consider the implications when your child is at play, during physical activities
- Please provide a named Ziploc bag to store them in during eating times etc
- Pupil face coverings must be brought in and out of school each day

- Please note that school staff do not have a responsibility to monitor/ensure a child is wearing a face covering

All visitors and parents will wear a face covering on school grounds

Personal Equipment and Stationery

- All pupil personal stationery for school is prepared and ready for use in a zip locked mesh pencil case this is stored in school at all times, pupils will not be able to share pencils, pens, erasers, coloured pencils etc.
- All children will need a 'home' pencil case for completing assignments and homework at home from October
- All books and copies are covered in plastic and are stored in school ready for your child to use
- All of the items stored in school are named
- All pupils should bring a small packet of tissues to school each day for personal use.
- Lunches Please include in each child's healthy lunchbox a paper napkin or piece of kitchen paper towel to school each day to place on their desk for lunchtime. When they are finished eating, the pupils can then wrap up all their crumbs etc. and replace all waste in their lunch bag/box.
- Please ensure your child has enough water for the day
- Lunchboxes and water bottles must be washed thoroughly at home each day.

All that pupils will need to bring to school each day is a small bag containing their lunch bag and reusable water bottle, as well as a waterproof hooded jacket. We ask that pupils do not bring other items to school. This measure will have the additional bonus of lightening the schoolbags.

Shared Equipment By necessity, some classroom equipment needs to be shared including tablets, laptops, library books/class readers and the equipment used for structured activities and play in Infant classrooms. The emphasis on regular handwashing and sanitising, in line with DES guidance, helps in the management of shared equipment

Pupil Mobile Phones Pupils must have a mobile phone licence in order to have a mobile phone in school. These must be kept in a named Ziploc bag and stored under class teacher supervision whilst in school

Support Teaching In keeping with our SEN policy <http://wicklowetns.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/WETNS-SEN-Policy-July-2016.pdf> 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 within the confines of a class level of 2 bubbles only for example Junior Infants only, 3rd classes only etc. 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.

Other school activities Please note that, for the moment, there will be no swimming, external trips or any after school activities. The 3 additional needs classes may go on a class trip within their own class bubble.