



KILMACANOGUE NATIONAL SCHOOL
RESPONSE PLAN FOR THE RE-OPENING OF THE SCHOOL
1ST MARCH 2021 and 15th March 2021

Context

This is an on-going working draft Response Plan document which has been drawn up in conjunction with various documents and circulars from the HSE and gov.ie including those listed below especially those available on the Department of Education and Skills website which contain all the elements required for the safe reopening of all primary schools in the country.

- COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of Primary and Special Schools (DES) (February 2021)
- Reopening Our Schools: The Roadmap for the full return to School (DES)
- Induction: Return to School Safely for Summer Provision 2020 (DES)
- Maintaining Physical Distance in the Classroom: Checklist for Primary Schools and Special Schools: Roadmap for the full return to School (DES)
- COVID-19 Interim Recommendations for the re-opening of Schools and Educational Facilities (HPSC)

As time elapses and given the current evolving nature of the COVID-19 virus, this working document may need to be edited and revised in accordance with HSE and gov.ie guidelines.

Going forward, in relation to the running of the school, the Board of Management of Kilmacanogue National School may need to amend some of the details and arrangements contained in this document to further ensure the health and safety of the whole school community especially the health and safety of the children.

Any changes made will be conveyed to the whole school community where appropriate.

Underlying Principles

- The school has a responsibility to make efforts to ensure the safety, health and well-being of all members of our school community – children, staff and parents. This plan has been formulated to better ensure that the school can exercise that duty of care.
- Assuming it is in keeping with public health advice and guidelines issued by the Department of Education and Skills, it is preferable for all children to return to school for all five days of the school week and for a full school day. This plan has been formulated to achieve that aim.
- It is not possible to eliminate the risk of infection. However, with the cooperation of all members of our school community, it is possible to minimise the risk of the virus being introduced to our 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.

Measures put in place by the school and maintained over the past few months to minimize any risk relating to COVID-19

- Clear plastic boxes with lids, 24 L and 43 L have been purchased by the school for every single child in the school, into which their own personal books, coats, lunches, pencil cases etc may be contained thus enabling regular surface cleaning and minimizing the contracting or spread of the COVID virus
- Every classroom was completely cleared at the end of August 2020 with only tables and chairs remaining. Resources/Equipment have been boxed/stored in the classroom so as to lessen any equipment or surface area which could attract the virus.
- Extra doors were added to the ‘new’ 4th and 6th Classrooms thus ensuring that the children enter directly into their classrooms avoiding unnecessary contact with children from another class BUBBLE.
- Separate entrances and corridors were allocated to 3rd and 5th Classes to avoid the children making unnecessary contact with children from another class BUBBLE.
- Bio-fogging has taken place ensuring that the school environment is 100% clear and sanitized
- All the carpets throughout the school have been deep cleaned.
- Extra rooms such as the various learning support rooms have been upgraded and made available in the school to facilitate large classes which may need to be split into smaller BUBBLES or PODS.

- A moveable interactive SMART board has been purchased to facilitate the teaching of children in various classes throughout the school especially those in smaller groups.
- The tarmac areas around the exterior of the school have been completely resurfaced creating areas on which the children can play including a soft surface area especially suited to the younger children.
- A large PVC shed has been installed to help the storage of school resources for the teachers.
- The school's intercom system, including the school bell, has been upgraded to a very high level which will help in the overall standard of communication in the school as well as adding an extra layer to the overall health and safety of the children.
- Each classroom has a telephone system installed which can be used by the class teacher to contact the Principal, Ms Murray, or the office or any other teacher in the case of any concerns.
- Hand sanitisers have been installed in every single classroom as well as throughout the school. The children will wash/sanitise their hands several times throughout the day
- Signage and posters outlining the important details and information relating to COVID – 19 are visible throughout the school building
- Face masks and visors as well as hand sanitizer pump action dispensers are distributed throughout the school
- 2 isolation areas have been set aside and kitted out with appropriate PPE equipment should any child or adult be taken ill
- Contact tracing forms are readily available for all visitors to the school, or anyone entering or leaving the premises.
- Taps have been adapted for the younger children to ease appropriate usage with appropriately 'hot' water to help eliminate infection and viruses.
- Hand unit soap dispensers as well as paper towel dispensers have been installed in every bathroom throughout the school.
- The daily cleaning regime of the school has been upgraded and is monitored on a daily basis.
- All policies and procedures in relation to COVID-19 have been written up and are available to the school community as well as being constantly updated/monitored to ensure that they are in-line with all HES and gov.ie guidelines.

Assumptions regarding BUBBLES and PODS and Playtime and Handwashing Regime

- All children return to school and classes operate within a BUBBLE system, with each class representing a BUBBLE system and remaining within that BUBBLE system throughout the school day
- Within each class group/BUBBLE, the children will be split into smaller groups called PODs. They will remain in these PODs for a certain amount of time allocated by the class teacher and will interact with those children in their POD group while in the classroom (outside they may all play together in their BUBBLE)
- The configuration of the POD may be changed after a period of time but only once there are at least 3 days between setting up the new POD and the old POD when the children are not at school, so as to help avoid any possibility of contracting COVID-19
- The school will be split into 2 groups for the purpose of break times. Classes from Junior Infants up to and including 2nd Classes will be called Junior Classes. Classes from 3rd Class up to and including 6th class will be called Senior Classes.
- Each Group will have at least (x1) play time of 10-15 minutes in the morning with the Junior Classes out playing from 10:45am to 11:00am and then the Senior Classes out playing from 11:05am to 11:20am. The Junior Classes will have playtime of 25-30 minutes in the afternoon from 12:25pm until 12:55pm. The Senior Classes will then have playtime from 1:00pm until 1:30pm. As can be seen, each of the Junior and Senior Classes will have separate break and lunch times. This is to avoid the mixing of BUBBLES and to help eliminate any contraction of COVID-19.
- Throughout the week, the classes will be assigned to various play areas so as to add a little diversity into the playing time of the children. All playground spaces will be supervised by the teachers on yard duty and supported by Special Needs Assistants as well as the Principal. The day-to-day details of all of this as well as those on supervision are all clearly written up in a Timetable and Roster. These details will be reviewed regularly and improved upon where necessary.
- The children will sanitise/wash their hands several times throughout the day especially before entering the classroom and before eating their food as well as after attending the bathroom.

- Within each class where appropriate and most especially in classes 3rd up to and including 6th class, the children will be further divided into PODS (maximum 6 children), with a minimum distance of 1 metre being maintained between PODS where possible. The children within each POD will work together, and where possible and feasible, will maintain the required distance from other PODS, whilst inside in the classroom.
- The POD system will not change until such a time as the DES and HSE advise us that it is safe to do so but the members of each pod may change, and certainly will not change unless there are 2-3 days of a gap where the spaces can be sanitized and quarantined so as to avoid cross contamination. This will be reviewed regularly.
- It may be necessary to split a class into 2 smaller groups where the numbers in a class are such as to prevent the ability of maintaining 1 metre distance between children/PODS. Kilmacanogue National School has prepared for this by making available ‘new’ classroom spaces containing a recently purchased interactive moveable SMART board. The school PE hall has been set up to facilitate such a possibility especially for the very large 5th and 6th Classes.

School Uniform and School Tracksuit

Some parents have suggested that it might be a good idea to have 2 jumpers, 2 tracksuit pants and 2 white polo tops alternating them every second day facilitating washing the children’s clothes to help minimise any potential infection from the COVID virus. The children may wear their PE outfit regularly at the moment, which comprises of the sweater, white polo, runners and tracksuit pants/shorts, as they will be outside as much as possible to facilitate ventilation and of course, well-being and exercise.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
School jumper	School jumper	School jumper	School jumper	School jumper
Tracksuit pants	Tracksuit pants	Tracksuit pants	Tracksuit pants	Tracksuit pants
Runners	Runners	Runners	Runners	Runners

Arrival at School

- The following information is based on trying to do the very best that can be done given the fact that Kilmacanogue National School has only one pathway to and from the school, which makes it very difficult to establish social distancing

- Every child should aim to arrive at the school gate for about 9:10am when the black gate will be opened by the school caretaker. No child is allowed to enter the school grounds before this time for health and safety reasons and to enable social distance in accordance with the HSE and gov.ie guidelines.
- All adults **MUST WEAR A FACE MASK** upon entering school grounds/property.
- Social distance must be maintained at all times.
- The children are now fully aware of where to go in the morning and what entrance doors to use. As usual, the parents/guardians of the Junior Infants and Senior Infants and First Class, where required, will continue to walk with their children up to their class
- No adult, apart from the staff, may enter the school building/classroom unless prearranged with the Principal for matters of urgency and at all times, adherence to HSE and gov.ie guidelines must be maintained at all times including social distancing.
- We ask that there be **NO CONGREGATING** at the Church car park before or after school. The school community is doing all that it can, so far successfully, to ensure that COVID-19 does not enter our school but we need the help of all adults, parents and guardians in the community at large.
- The school layout has been reconfigured and will be well sign posted and for the foreseeable future, the **3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th Classes** will walk up the path towards the school and **take a left** to access their classrooms (where the Junior Classes were in the past)
- The **Senior Infant, 1st and 2nd Classes**, having walked up the school path, will **take a right** to access their classrooms (where the Senior Classes were in the past)
- The **Junior Infant Class** will walk up the school path and **take a left** as in the past, but then keep walking all the way to the top, where the ‘new’ tarmac pitch is, to their lovely big classroom (where 4th class was last year)
- The Board of Management will continue to assess the school layout along with the various entrances and exits to ensure that the school community has the best possible arrangement for the health and safety of the children.
- No adults, other than staff members, should enter the building and ideally no adult, other than staff members, should be on the school grounds once the children have arrived at school
- Messages for teachers should be sent by email to kilmacanoguens@gmail.com or by phoning the school office at 01 2861934.
- At the moment face to face meetings are not allowed under the HSE gov.ie guidelines, so all contact will have to take place via phone calls/emails or ZOOM.

- If your child is late, they should proceed to the front door of the school accompanied by an adult in the case of younger children and buzz in. They will then be accompanied to their classroom by a member of staff.

End of the School Day

- **Junior Infants** will go home each day at 2pm when their teacher will hand them over to their respective parent/guardian/minder at the class's exterior door.
- **Senior Infants** will go home each day at **2 pm** when their teacher will hand them over to their respective parent/guardian/minder at the class's exterior door.
- All other classes from **1st up to and including 6th** will leave school at **3 pm**, the usual time for school closure, walking down the school path as far as the school gate **led by their class teacher**.
- Each class will leave separately and walk behind the class in front so as to minimise interaction and help facilitate social distance 2 metres apart as far as is possible given that there is only one entrance and exit pathway to and from the school.
- In the case of 3rd Class up to and including 6th Class, the children will leave the school and walk down the school path maintaining their own unique POD group led by their individual class teacher.

Access to the School and Contact Log (see Section 4.2 and 4.7 and Appendices 5 and 6 of the DES Covid19-Response Plan February 2021)

- Access to the school building will be in line with agreed school procedures.
- Parents/Guardians **MUST** complete a Return to School Declaration Form attesting to the health and fitness of their child in accordance to HSE and gov.ie guidelines to return to school safely. This must be completed **BEFORE** their child returns to school after any holiday or break in attendance due to illness, remote learning resulting from lockdown.
- A Return to Work (RTW) form must be completed and returned to the school by all staff, including all ancillary staff, before returning to the school. The school will request the staff to confirm in writing or verbally that the details in the pre-return to work form remain unchanged following subsequent periods of closure such as school holidays.
- All visitors calling to Kilmacanogue National School will, for health and safety reasons and following strict HSE and gov.ie guidelines, be restricted for essential purposes only and limited to those who have obtained prior approval from the Principal, Miss Niamh Murray.

- All staff members will sign the log in book for staff each day recording the time and date.
- A more detailed contact log will be maintained for all visitors to the school including those carrying out essential maintenance work in the school.
- The Department of Education Inspectorate may also need to visit the school to support as appropriate in the implementation of public health advice relating to creating a safe learning and working environment for all
- Where possible, children from 1st Class up to and including 6th Class should make their way to and from the school gate independently of parents, in order to limit the number of adults on the premises at arrival and departure times.
- As mentioned before, all adults **MUST WEAR A FACE MASK** when on school property.
- At the moment face to face meetings are not allowed under the HSE gov.ie guidelines, so all contact will have to take place via phones calls/emails or ZOOM including Parent/Teacher meetings relating to the progress of their child.

Collection of Children during the School Day

If any adult needs to collect a child during the course of the school day, the following arrangements will apply

- When the adult arrives at the school, they should either phone the office or use the buzz in bell at the front door of the school to alert the office that they have arrived
- The child will be brought from their class to the adult by a member of staff or school secretary to the front door of the school.
- The adult who is collecting will be asked to ‘sign their child out’ by allowing the secretary to fill in the form so as to avoid any cross contamination.
- Due to Covid19, no adult should enter the school building, unless prearranged by the Principal or the class teacher in conjunction with the class teacher.

Children/Adults who should not attend school

All 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. Adults and children should cooperate 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 of COVID-19 in the school.

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

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

- Children/Adults who have been diagnosed with Covid-19
- Children/Adults who live with someone who has symptoms of the virus
- Children/Adults who have been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with Covid-19
- Children/Adults who have a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending
- Children/Adults who have been in contact with a person who has a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending
- Children/Adults with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school
- Children/Adults who have returned home after travelling abroad and must self-isolate for a period of 14 days; in such instances the latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel must be sought and followed.
- Children/Adults who are generally unwell

Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19 (see Section 8 pages 26/27 and Appendix 7 of the DES Covid19-Response Plan)

Pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19. If a pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while in the building, the following are the procedures will be implemented:

- Parents/guardians 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 and call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home
- The school will facilitate the child presenting with symptoms to remain in isolation, until they are collected by their parents/guardians at the earliest time possible.

- The child presenting with symptoms should 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.
- 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.

Impact of a Suspected or Confirmed Case of Covid-19 in a Class

If the school is notified that a person in your child's class has a suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19

- The parents of all children in the class will be notified
- Public health advice will be sought from the relevant agencies such as the HSE.

Supporting the Learning of Children who cannot attend school

If a child is not able to attend school for an extended period of time resulting from COVID-19 related issues and has supporting documentation such as a medical cert from their doctor as per DES and gov.ie and HSE guidelines, the class teacher (and / or the special education teacher, where relevant) will share suggested activities to support the child's learning at home with his / her parents / guardians.

Staff Duties and Wellbeing

Section 10 of the DES Covid19 Response Plan outlines the duties of staff. **Section 12 of the DES Covid19 Response Plan** outlines the details regarding Employee Assistance and Wellbeing programme.

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.

Staff should not return to or attend school in the event of the following:

- If they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus
- If they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.
- 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

Induction Training

Covid-19 induction training for all staff prior to returning to work last August 28th 2020, has already taken place, with any updates actively promoted for training for this current return to work March 1st 2021. The training has been developed by the DES (see [Section 4.1 of the DES Covid-19 Response Plan for more details](#)).

In addition, all staff must complete the Return to Work (RTW) Form 3 days before returning to work.

Those in the very high-risk category should take advice from the HSE. (see [Section 4.2 and Appendix 2 of the DES Covid-19 Response Plan](#))

Lead Worker Representative (LWR)

The LWR works, in collaboration with the Kilmacanogue National School and the Board of Management, to assist in the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19 and monitor adherence to these measures (see [Section 4.3 and Appendix 3 of the DES Covid-19 Response Plan](#))

The LWR for our school is Ms Ann Marie Bourke, Deputy Principal.

Email: ambourke@kilmacanoguens.com

Signage

The school has signage displayed throughout the school outlining signs and symptoms of Covid-19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene (see [Section 4.4 of the DES Covid-19 Response Plan](#))

Health & Safety Risk Assessment

This has been carried out in line with [Section 4.6 and Appendix 4 of the DES Covid-19 Response Plan](#).

Control Measures

- Know the symptoms of Covid19 ([see Section 5.1 of the DES Covid-19 Response Plan](#))
- Respiratory Hygiene ([see Section 5.2 of the DES Covid-19 Response Plan](#))
- Hand Hygiene: Hand sanitisers will be available at all entry points and in all class and support rooms in addition to soap (in all toilets) and any alcohol-based sanitisers will not be stored or used near naked flame([see Section 5.3 of the DES Covid-19 Response Plan](#))
- Physical Distancing ([see Section 5.4 of the DES Covid-19 Response Plan](#))
- For Hygiene and Cleaning in Schools ([see Section 7 and Appendix 9 of the DES Covid-19 Response Plan](#)) The school is investing in additional resources and new protocols regarding hygiene and cleaning of our school on a regular basis. The school is thoroughly cleaned everyday once the children have gone home and a strict regime/plan is followed which outlines the areas and items to be cleaned. The regime/plan is initialed by the cleaner indicating that the work has been done.
- 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.

Personal Equipment

- In so far as possible, it is requested that all children will bring their own pens, pencils, colours, rubbers, etc., to school in their own (labelled) 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.
- Although the school will have ample supply of hand sanitisers, we recommend the child could also have their own small hand sanitiser for use. This would avoid unnecessary gathering of children at sinks, etc. when the children's hands look clean (as per DES

Guidelines). The sanitiser should be approved for use for children. We recommend that your child is given a bottle that is not full in order to limit any potential hazard(s) in its use.

- The school has provided each child with a plastic box with a lid into which they must store all their own books and equipment. This box is wiped down at the end of every day.

Shared Equipment

By necessity, some classroom equipment needs to be shared including tablets, laptops and 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. A sanitisation unit or area may be used for this purpose.

Special Education Teaching (see Section 9 of the DES Covid-19 Response Plan)

In keeping with our Special Education policy, learning support will be provided by a blended approach of in-class support and withdrawal.

- 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 integrity of the POD and BUBBLE is maintained where/when possible.
- Where children from 3rd to 6th Class receive support in one of the SET rooms, social distancing of 1 metre will be maintained between each child in the group.
- The tables and chairs in SET rooms will be wiped clean in between different groups attending, where possible.

PPE

PPE may be worn by staff where it is not possible to maintain the required social distancing requirements, as per the latest advice from the DES and HSE, especially where there may be underlying health conditions. All staff are required to wear face masks and to maintain social distance of 2 metres at all times where/when possible.

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, as was the case occasionally in previous years. 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 and guardians. Ideally the school will be made aware of a teacher's absence the night before or at the very latest by 8am the day of the absence so as to give as much notice as possible to parents/guardians not to send their children for that particular class to school that day. The parents/guardians of any child arriving at school whose teacher is absent will be contacted and asked to collect their child.

PE

Where possible, PE will take place outdoors and use of equipment will be confined, where practicable, to the sets that have been distributed to class groupings. If the PE hall is being used by class groupings, common touch points will be cleaned at intervals throughout the school day. Each class has its own set of equipment which is cleaned/sanitized after each interaction. Social distance is maintained at all times where it is possible to do so, and the integrity of the POD and BUBBLE is upheld.

Extra-curricular Activities

In order to maintain the integrity and purpose of the 'bubble and pod' system, the Board of Management has taken the difficult but prudent decision to defer the start of all extra-curricular activities. This decision will be reviewed by the Board of Management during the course of 2021 following all directives from the DES and HSE and gov.ie guidelines.

After School Clubs and Activities

In order to maintain the integrity and purpose of the BUBBLE and POD system encouraged by the Department of Education and Skills and the HSE, it is with regret that the Board of Management of Kilmacanogue National School has decided to defer the start of all clubs and after school activities for the foreseeable future. This decision will be reviewed by the Board of Management during the course of 2021 following all directives from the DES and HSE and gov.ie guidelines.