



Plan for Reopening of Gaelscoil an Ghoirt Álainn

(Infants to Rang 6 2021)

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/guardians and staff. 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 on a full-time basis. 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 school and the consequent risk of its spread.
- As well as cooperation, the flexibility and goodwill of all will be required to ensure the plan can be implemented.

Assumptions

- All children return to school and classes operate within a bubble system. Essentially, each class operates as its own bubble and every effort will be made to reduce contact with children in other classes.
- The day will include 1x 20 minute break (10 minutes in the class eating and 10 minutes on the yard) and 1x 30 minute break (15 minutes in the class eating and 15 minutes on the yard). This arrangement changes on the days when we are able to access the Tank Field (we do not foresee this in the coming weeks but it will come into play after the Easter Holidays).
- Within each class the children will be further divided into pods, with a minimum distance of 1 metre being maintained between pods. Hand sanitiser will be available at all entry points and in all classroom and support rooms.

Timetable

Time	Action
8:30 am	Start of drop-off period
8:50 am	School starts
10.20 am - 11.15am	Staggered break times
12.00 pm - 1:15pm	Staggered lunch times
1.30 pm	Infant classes finish
2.30 pm	R1-R6 finish

Entrance and Exit Doors

Door number	Entrance and Exit Points	Number
1	Enter through the main school entrance	1 - Junior infant classes Máire L & Máire P (R. Máire P exit via door 4)
2	Enter at back of the school	2 - Senior infants R. Sionhán, Eilish & Rang 1 Fionnuala.
3	Enter at door nearest the Tank Field	3 Rang 1/2 Aoife & Rang 2 Gavin
4	Enter at door nearest the carpark	4

Entrance and Exit Doors for Specific Classes

Teacher/Múinteoir	Class/Rang	Entrance Point Bealach Isteach	Exit Point Bealach Amach
Week starting 1 st March			
Máire P	Naíonáin Bheaga	1	4
Máire L	Naíonáin Bheaga	1	1
Siobhán	Naíonáin Mhóra	2	2
Eilish	Naíonáin Mhóra	2	2
Anna	Rang 1	2	2
Aoife	R1/2	3	2
Gavin	R2	3	3
Week starting 15 th March			
Gearóid.	R3	4	4
Clár L	R3	4	4
Clár D.	R4	4	4
Conchúr	R4	4	1
Lisa T.	R5	1	1
Niamh S.	R5/6	3	3
Clodagh	R6	3	3

Arrival at school

- The entry points into the building for school children at the start of the school day is listed above.
- To facilitate a safe entry for the children, the doors of the school will be opened at 8.30 am and there will be supervision available in the classrooms from this time onwards.

- Please note that school will begin, as normal, at 8:50 am.
- We ask parents/guardians to observe social distancing guidelines when dropping off their child and to exit the grounds once your child has safely been passed over to a member of staff.
Parents are asked to wear masks when in the vicinity of the school grounds at all times.
- No adults, other than staff members, should enter the school building.

End of School Day

- The exit from the building at the end of the school day is listed above.
- We ask that parents/guardians who are collecting their children from school observing social distancing guidelines.

Collection of Children during the School Day

If a parent/guardian needs to collect a child during the school day, we ask that where possible, the class teacher is informed beforehand. The following arrangements will apply:

- When the parent/guardian arrives at the school, they should use the intercom at the hall door to alert the office that they have arrived or else speak to Lisa directly.
- The child will be alerted of the parent/guardian's arrival and will go to the office to be signed out.
- No parent/guardian should enter the school building at any time, unless invited to do so.

Dropping off essential items during the School Day

If a parent/guardian needs to drop off an essential item for a child, the following arrangements will apply:

- When the parent/guardian arrives at the school, they should use the intercom at the hall door of the school to alert the office that they have arrived.
- A member of staff will arrange for the essential item to be delivered to the child.

Physical Distancing

We are constantly working on upgrading our procedures and routines within the school to ensure that there is as much physical distancing as is possible. Physical distancing will be achieved in a number of ways:

- **Increasing Separation-** This will be achieved by reconfiguring the classrooms to maximise space. Each class group will be referred to as a bubble and we will ensure that there is as little contact as possible between children in different bubbles. Within the bubbles, children will be organised into pods. A pod is a group of children who will sit together and who will stay in their pod while in the bubble/classroom. The Department of Education does not expect there to be physical distancing in place for Junior Infants to 2nd, but from 3rd to 6th there will be at least a 1 metre distance between pods in classes. All of the children attending Gaelscoil an Ghoirt Álainn are divided into designated PODs. These PODs will remain the same until at least the next extended period of school closure - Easter, Mid-term etc.
- **Decreasing Interaction-** This will be achieved by decreasing the potential for children from different bubbles to interact. There will be specific routes for various classes/bubbles to enter and exit the school and to access their classrooms. The yard will also be divided into four

sections to provide individual play areas for all the classes from Junior Infants to 6th Class during the staggered break times. (On fine days, when the field is dry the 'páirc' will be divided into 7)

Corridors

We will observe our usual practice of keeping to the left when in the corridors.

Curriculum

It will take time for staff and pupils to adjust to being back in a school environment and be ready to engage with teaching and learning. Time will be spent on settling the pupils and getting them ready for learning which will yield positive outcomes and reduce anxiety. There will be a focus on pupil well-being. As was the case in September, during the initial weeks of our return to school, we will be giving greater time and attention to areas such as Social, Personal and Health Education, Physical Education, Languages and Mathematics. It is intended that as schools form comprehensive pictures of where pupils are in their learning they will work towards more typical curriculum plans.

Hygiene and Health

There will be a considerable focus on hand washing and hand sanitising upon returning to school, particularly at the following times:

- On arrival at school
- Before eating or drinking
- Before and after using the toilet
- After playing outdoors
- When hands are physically dirty
- When a child/adult coughs or sneezes

Teachers will review children proper hygiene procedures regarding hand washing, touching surfaces and etiquette related to sneezing, coughing or spitting with children. We would be grateful if you could also emphasise safe behaviour in this regard to your children at home.

Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19

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 which 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 always maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic child.
- 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.
- Parents and guardians are expected to make arrangements to bring the child home.
- The school will facilitate the child presenting with symptoms to remain in isolation, if they cannot immediately go home.

- 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 bin 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 will advise them to inform their GP by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used.
- If the child is too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 (in line with current school practice) and inform the relevant professionals that the sick child is a Covid-19 suspect.
- Arrangements will be made for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.
- Any child returning to school following any absence must fill out a return to school form. This can be forwarded to the class teacher via email or by our online form which can be found on our website or in our school app.

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.

Children who should not attend school

While we look forward to welcoming all children back to school, we would ask parents that if children are displaying colds, coughs or flu like symptoms, they should not be sent to school. If children display such symptoms at school, they will be isolated, and we will contact and ask parents to collect them. Please ensure your contact details, or any emergency contacts, are up to date.

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 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 with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school.
- Children who have returned home after travelling abroad (from any country) must inform the school and self-isolate for a period of 14 days.
- Children who are generally unwell and/or presenting with cold or flu symptoms.
- Principal and Management reserve the right to send children home from school if the child displays any symptoms of Covid-19.
- The process of children returning to school will follow guidance from the HSE.

Personal Equipment

- It is requested that all items have the child's name on them for ease of identification.
- All baskets/boxes - including books copies etc - will need to be returned to school by the children following on from our extended period of school closure. We request for all school related items to be returned on the first day of your child's return to school. From this day on

we aim to ensure that the number of items that are transferred from home to school and vice versa is kept to an absolute minimum.

- We ask that the covers of all books/copybooks and other items that are being returned to school having been used at home are wiped with disinfectant before their return.
- *Wash Bag:* We ask that children have their own little washbag, a labelled zip locked bag is sufficient. In these bags, we ask that children bring in their own small personal hand sanitiser, a face cloth or small hand towel to dry their hands after washing them, a small packet of tissues and a facemask (optional). The school will of course provide hand sanitiser in each classroom and soap for the washing of hands.
- *Pencil Case:* Children are asked to have a 'school' pencil case which is always left in school. This pencil case should be compact so that it will fit in the basket under the desk with textbooks and copies to facilitate daily cleaning of table-tops. Children should also have a 'home' pencil case for completing assignments and homework at home. This measure will have the bonus of lightening the schoolbags also. Children will not be able to share pencils, pens, erasers, coloured pencils etc. in school and all items should be clearly marked with your child's name.
- *Lunches:* Parents/Guardians must ensure that children bring their lunches to school in the morning to avoid adults having to come to the school during the day. In the event that a child forgets his/her lunch, parents will be contacted. It must be stressed that should this happen; children will not be permitted to share food or drink.

School Uniforms

In order to facilitate regular washing/changing, we have decided that on alternate days, the children shall wear their school tracksuit and uniform on the following days. Naíonáin Bheaga up to Rang 2, the classes on the ground floor, will wear tracksuits on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and on Tuesday and Thursday will wear their uniforms.

Upon their return to school on March 15th 2021, the children in Rang 3, 4, 5, 6, the classes upstairs, will wear their uniforms on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and their tracksuits on Tuesday and Thursday.

It is advisable that children should only wear their uniforms or tracksuits only for school related activities. Uniforms or tracksuits should be taken off straight after the child arrives home from school for the day. They should not be worn in non-school based after-school activities or facilities.

Shared Equipment

By necessity, some classroom equipment needs to be shared including iPads, PE equipment and the equipment used for structured activities and play in the Infant classrooms. Cleaning of such shared equipment with wipes or other cleaning products will take place at regular intervals and/or after use to minimise the risk of the spread of infection.

Yards

The DES guidelines state that the risk of virus transmission from contact with outside surfaces or play areas is low. It is not possible to maintain physical distancing when primary school children play together outdoors, but we will allocate a specific area for each bubble/ class to play in. Yard time will

be staggered into 4 groups as listed below. The yard itself will be divided into 4 sections /grúpaí with only one class allowed in each section during play time.

An Clós: 4 Ghrúpa : A, B, C, D

Grúpa A: Naí. Bheaga Máire P, Naí. Bheaga Máire P, Naí. Mhóra Siobhán, Naí. Mhóra Eilish,
Grúpa B: Rang 1 Anna, Rang 1&2 Aoife, Rang 2 Gavin,
Grúpa C: Rang 3 Gearóid, Rang 3 Clár L., Rang 4 Clár D., Rang 4 Conor,
Grúpa D: Rang 5 Lisa T, Rang 5&6 Niamh S, Rang 6 Clodagh,

Children will eat in the classroom either before or after yard time as indicated below. **Little Break / Lón Beag:**

Grúpa A	Grúpa B	Grúpa C	Grúpa D
10.20-10.30 Ithe sa seomra	10.20-10.30 Sa chlós	10.50-11.00 Ithe sa Seomra	10.50-11.00 Sa Chlós
10.35-10.45 Sa chlós	10.35-10.45 Ithe sa Seomra	11.05-11.15 Sa Chlós	11.05-11.15 Ithe sa Seomra

Big Break / Lón Mór:

Grúpa A	Grúpa B	Grúpa C	Grúpa D
12.00-12.15 Ithe sa seomra	12.00-12.15 Sa chlós	12.45-1.00 Ithe sa Seomra	12.45-1.00 Sa Chlós
12.15-12.30 Sa chlós	12.15-12.30 Ithe sa Seomra	1.00-1.15 Sa Chlós	1.00-1.15 Ithe sa Seomra

When possible we will use 'An Páirc' (although we don't expect to be using this until April/May). The size of the Tank field will allow us to have 7 groups in the field at any one time with each pod having more space in which to play in.

On these days

downstairs classes (**infants to Rang 2**) will

and will play on

while upstairs classes (**Rang 3 to Rang 6**) will

and will play on

eat from 12.15 to 12.30

the field from 12.30 to 12.45

eat from 12.30 to 12.45

the field from 12.45 to 1.15.

PPE

Please be aware that all staff members will be wearing face coverings in school, as per Department guidelines. Please inform children of this. Current guidance from the Department of Education will always be followed.

For a limited amount of staff, Additional PPE will need to be used occasionally or constantly due to the nature of certain work activities or work areas. This might include roles such as:

- Assisting with intimate care needs
- Administering First Aid
- Where a suspected case of Covid-19 is identified while the school is in operation.

Where staff provide healthcare to children with medical needs in the school environment, they will apply standard precautions as per usual.

Toilets

We are fortunate enough that each classroom is equipped with its own toilets and these will only be used by the relevant class groupings throughout the day. Children will be encouraged to use the toilets in their own classrooms before yard times. In the case of an emergency, pupils will use the toilets in the room closest to the yard and this area will be cleaned after break time. Soap dispensers are installed in the individual classroom toilets and all toilets will be cleaned daily.

Extra-Curricular Activities

We will be guided by Government advice on indoor and outdoor school related activities. For, these will not be available. Rince gaelach will resume from week one as stringent controls and safe practices have already been established.

Special Education

Special Education will be provided by a blended approach of in-class support and withdrawal. The provision of support will be organised to ensure a minimum amount of movement between class bubbles.

- Where children receive support in one of the SET rooms, social distancing of 1 metre will be maintained between each child in the group where applicable.
- The tables and chairs in the SET rooms will be wiped clean in between different groups attending.

Where a Special Education Teacher and/or Special Needs Assistant is working alongside a class teacher in a classroom, both individuals will be mindful of maintaining social distance from one another. Special Education Teachers and/or Special Needs Assistant can at times rotate between areas/classes but this will be minimised where possible. When rotation occurs, agreed sanitising routines will be observed.

Supporting the Learning of Children Who Cannot Attend School

If a child, who is medically certified as being high risk, is not able to attend school for an extended period of time, the class teacher in conjunction with the Special Education Teacher, will share suggested activities with parents/guardians. These activities will be used to support the child's learning at home but will not be compulsory and families should complete as much work as is possible for them.

Making contact with the teachers

This is going to be more challenging initially for parents and teachers as we navigate our way through this pandemic.

We will be asking you, the parents, to make contact with the office with any message. We are conscious that there will be times where it will be necessary for you to speak or to meet the teachers and vice versa. When you need to speak to the múinteoir, parents are asked to make an appointment through the office at all times. Teachers will contact parents by phone after class, or if urgent as soon as possible. We are very conscious that we have always had an open door policy for parents and that we've always welcomed you into the school building. Unfortunately, however, we need to change this for a while to minimize the number of people in corridors and classroom and to ensure social distancing. We will greatly miss our interaction with you but this will be changed as soon as possible/when it is safe to do so. **Masks must be worn at all times** when a parent is in the school vicinity.

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, a Special Education Teacher/Principal will be asked to teach the class. If this is not possible, and as it is not appropriate for the class to be divided into groups and be accommodated in other classes, 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/guardians.

This is a living document and may be reviewed and amended to take into account new guidance from www.gov.ie, www.dbei.ie, www.hse.ie, www.hpsc.ie, www.hsa.ie, www.education.ie or agreements with education partners as appropriate for primary schools. We undertake to review this document in full in the coming weeks and we will update you with any changes made accordingly.

Gaelscoil an Ghoirt Álainn will continue to assess, review and evaluate this plan, and will make the necessary amendments and changes to keep all pupils, staff and parents safe.

Ar scáth a chéile a mhairimid.