

Daelscoil Shlí Dála

An Bealach Mór,
Contae Laoise.
slighdala@eircom.net

Uimhir Rolla: 20224K
Fón: 0505 41810
www.slidala.ie

Plan for reopening autumn 2020

24 August 2020

Underlying Principles of the re-opening plan:

The Board of Management of 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 our school can exercise that duty of care in the face of the current global Covid-19 epidemic.

One of the key messages from the recent Department Roadmap to manage the risks of COVID-19, is "to do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into the school. If infection is not introduced it cannot be spread." To this end, within the school, a range of essential control measures have been implemented to reduce the risk of the spread of Covid-19 virus and to protect the safety, health and welfare of staff, pupils, parents and visitors in so far as is possible.

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. Our goal is to work together as a team to do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into the school and to reduce the likelihood of the spread within the school itself. We aim to follow H.S.E, H.S.A. and the Department of Education recommendations at all times. We will continue to monitor the status of the pandemic and endeavour to find successful interventions and solutions to provide a safe school learning and working environment.

We must be aware that 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.

Changes to this document may be made as new information on the status of the virus is revealed. We will endeavour to keep you informed of those changes as soon as they occur.

The co-operation, flexibility and good will of all parties involved will be required to help with this plan being implemented. Please be patient as we endeavour to ensure the safety of everyone involved.

Control Measures - To prevent Introduction and Spread of COVID-19

Classroom distancing:

As children return to school, please be aware that mainstream classes will operate within a bubble / pod system whilst Ionad an Dóchais pupils will continue in their normal settings.

Department guidelines, have advised that, "The risk of infection may be reduced by structuring pupils and their teachers into Class Bubbles (i.e. a class grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible) and discrete groups or "Pods" within those class bubbles, to the extent that this is practical."

Following these recommendations, mainstream classes have been grouped into three main "Bubbles," while Ionad an Dóchais classes will remain as they were with one teacher and two SNAs to each room. Class breakdown is as follows:

1. Naíonáin Bheaga and Naíonain Mhóra will be taught by Múinteoir Shóna
2. Ranganna 1-3 will be taught by Múinteoir Sinéad
3. Ranganna 4-6 will be taught by Múinteoir Róise
4. Ionad an Dóchais Rang 1 as normal with Múinteoir Teresa
5. Ionad an Dóchais Rang 2 as normal with Múinteoir Catherine

The aim of the system is that class groupings mix only with their own class, from arrival at school in the morning, until departure at the end of the school day. Break times will be structured to facilitate this. To the greatest extent possible, pupils and teaching staff will consistently be in the same Class Bubbles although this will not be possible at all times. Staff interaction with children will also be limited as much as possible.

In order to maintain physical distancing in the classrooms each classroom has in so far as possible reconfigured class spaces to maximise physical distancing

The senior class bubble will be further divided into pods, and where possible, but only where possible, the 1 metre distance between children within each pod will be kept. Children must remain in their pods until otherwise instructed.

Social physical contact for example hand-to-hand greetings, hugs etc. will be discouraged.

School Opening/Closing Times:

Doors will open at 8.40am each morning to admit children. Children should enter the school immediately upon arrival. We ask that children avoid congregating at the school gates
In view of the current Department guidelines and school-opening regulations, we feel it is best practice to postpone *Morning and Afternoon Clubs* clubs for the first term. Avoiding

cross contamination and the spread of Covid-19 via pupils interacting will be our main priority for the first few weeks. As time goes on, we will assess the situation in due course and when it is safe to do so, then these clubs will hopefully resume.

School Premises

Adults, other than staff members, should **NOT** enter the school premises.

Parents and guardians should avoid congregating at the school gates or in the car park where physical distancing may not be respected.

Appointments

Parents must make an appointment if they wish to speak with a teacher. This meeting will take place at an arranged designated location and social distancing must be maintained at all times. Should you need to speak to a teacher, please call the office and a time will be arranged for the teacher to make contact. Face to face meetings between parents and teachers should not take place, unless in exceptional circumstances and with prior approval from the principal.

Parking

Cars must be parked at the Church end of the car-park. Under no circumstances should cars park at the gate or in front of the school fence. ***Parking here puts children's lives at risk.*** We ask that you keep this area clear at all times throughout the school day. Parents of younger children may walk towards the gate whilst maintaining social distancing to collect their child from the teacher/SNA. Parents of older children should wait alongside their cars ensuring that they are clearly visible, again maintaining social distancing .

Entry and Exit Points:

Seomraí Múinteoir Róise and Teresa will use the large side gates upon entry and exiting the school whilst all other classes may use the front gate as normal. Children are asked to observe social distancing guidelines as they enter and exit the school.

Collection of Children during the School Day:

If an adult has to collect a child during the course of the school day, we ask you to inform the school as soon is possible so that arrangements may be put in place. The child will be brought to the front gate by a member of staff. Please bring a pen to sign the child out. Adults must not enter the school premises.

Personal Equipment:

It is requested that all children will bring their own plastic lunchbox for ease of wiping and washing. Lunchboxes should be washed in warm soapy water on a daily basis.

- We would request that pupils use plastic-only pencil cases in school. Again this is so that they can be washed easily. Pencils, pens and colours will be provided initially upon return to school. We would ask parents to ensure that each child has an adequate

supply of these at all times throughout the year as they will no longer be allowed to share or borrow school supplies.

- Parents are asked to provide each child with a new *clearly labelled* rubber and pencil parer at the start of the school year.
- Under no circumstances will children be allowed to share drinks or food.
- Unidentified/unclaimed drinks bottles will be disposed of.
- Please ensure your child has all equipment necessary each morning as we will not be able to facilitate the dropping of lunches, musical instruments, sports equipment etc. to classrooms.
- School bags should be checked on a regular basis to ensure they are free from all debris. Wash if necessary.

School Uniforms:

Whilst it isn't necessary to wash uniforms on a daily basis, items of clothing should be checked **each evening** for food stains, spillages and other soiling. In keeping with hygiene advice, children must present with clean school clothes.

Shared Curricular Equipment:

Cleaning of all shared equipment with wipes or other cleaning products will take place at regular intervals to minimise the risk of the spread of infection. Toys will be cleaned regularly in line with the guidelines provided in the Department's response plan.

Hand and Respiratory Hygiene

Department Guidelines inform us that "Pupils should perform hand hygiene:

- On arrival at school;
- Before eating or drinking;
- After using the toilet;
- After playing outdoors;
- When their hands are physically dirty;
- When they cough or sneeze."

As advised by H.S.E. and the Department, hand sanitiser units have been installed in each classroom and throughout the school. Children will be encouraged to wash their hands upon entering the school and may use hand sanitizers once hands are clean.

Children should be encouraged to follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering their mouth and nose with a tissue or their bent elbow when they cough or sneeze. Used should be disposed of immediately and safely into a nearby bin.

Each class will have an established routine for hand washing, sanitizing etc. which will quickly become familiar to the children.

After the morning routine of washing and sanitizing their hands, as well as wiping down their pencil cases and lunch boxes, children should enter their classrooms in the morning and after breaks and take their seats promptly.

HSE guidelines on handwashing: <https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html>

Ventilation:

Weather permitting, classroom doors and windows will remain open for as long as is possible.

Cleaning

The Board of Management has agreed to undertake rigorous measures in order to support the enhanced cleaning required to minimise the risks of COVID-19 within the school. As well as routine daily cleaning, contract cleaners have been engaged to clean the classrooms at the weekend.

Curriculum

Schools have been asked to place a greater emphasis on the teaching of Mathematics, Languages, Social and Personal Hygiene and Physical Education upon re-opening. These areas of the curriculum will be our priority upon our return.

Lead Worker Representative:

All schools have been asked to appoint representatives to help deal with Covid-19 outbreaks. Múinteoir Róise, Múinteoir Teresa and Rúnaí Mary are the lead worker representatives for Gaelscoil Shlí Dála

PPE:

Staff may wear masks and/or visors or other protective clothing when they feel it is appropriate. While it is not envisaged that PPE will be worn by staff in general, staff who are attending to particular care needs or who are administering first aid will wear appropriate PPE including gloves and face masks and/or face visors. Good hand hygiene will be observed where teachers need to help an infant with laces/coat etc.

The wearing of masks

Department guidelines state "Masks /Cloth face coverings are not suitable for children under the age of 13" and therefore are not required be worn in school.

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 affected. If a substitute teacher is not available, in the current circumstances it may be necessary for children to remain at home if their teacher becomes ill and a substitute cannot be found.

Music Classes:

Music classes are postponed until further notice. It is hoped that a plan might be put in place to continue with these lessons while maintaining best practice going forward. We will assess the situation on our return and when it is safe to do so, then these classes will hopefully resume.

Birthday Parties

Children who wish to do so may celebrate their birthday in school by bringing party/multi-packs of sweets. In the current circumstances cakes and buns will not be permitted.

Homework

Homework will be given at the teacher's discretion depending on the needs of the class.

Requests for work experience for TY students:

Unfortunately, these placements will not take place in the first term as we endeavour to minimise the risk of infection within the school and adjust to our new circumstances. It is hoped that these students may be accommodated later in the year if conditions improve.

Dealing with Covid-19 illness

Parents are asked to be vigilant and if they feel their child is unwell to keep him/her at home. The Department of Education has provided the following link to assist with identifying Coronavirus symptoms: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/symptoms.html>

There are a number of steps that can be taken such as measuring temperatures, checking for coughs etc. before presenting for school each day. **It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to ensure that children do not attend school whilst feeling unwell.**

Staff will not be conducting regular temperature checks on children.

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 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 and must self-isolate for a period of 14 days.
- Children who are generally unwell.
- Children who have had an episode of vomiting or diarrhoea in the last 48 hours (as per HSE guidelines: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/diarrhoea-and-vomiting.html>)

Dealing with a suspected case of Covid 19:

If a child becomes unwell during the school day, the staff will follow the School Covid-19 Response Plan whereby the child will be isolated and parents will be informed immediately.

If parents/guardians cannot be reached, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick child may be a Covid-19 suspect. The staff will then follow HSE guidelines and will continue to try to contact parents/guardians.

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.

If your child goes home with suspected Covid-19 symptoms from the isolation room, we would expect that a doctor would be contacted and clarification sought on the child's condition before returning to school as per current guidelines.

Please remember: pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19.

Supporting the Learning of Children who cannot attend school:

If a child is not able to attend school for an extended period of time, suggested activities to support the child's learning at home will be shared with parents by the class teacher.

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, public health advice will be sought and followed.

This plan was adopted by the Board of Management on 24.08.2020

Signed: _____

Chairperson of the Board of Management.

Date: _____