

Scoil Mhuire



COVID-19 Policy Statement

Scoil Mhuire is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our staff and a safe learning environment for all our pupils. To ensure that, we have developed the following COVID-19 Response Plan. The BOM and all school staff are responsible for the implementation of this plan and a combined effort will help contain the spread of the virus. We will:

- continue to monitor our COVID-19 response and amend this plan in consultation with our staff
- provide up to date information to our staff and pupils on the Public Health advice issued by the HSE and Gov.ie
- display information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and correct handwashing techniques
- agree with staff, a worker representative who is easily identifiable to carry out the role outlined in this plan
- inform all staff and pupils of essential hygiene and respiratory etiquette and physical distancing requirements
- adapt the school to facilitate physical distancing as appropriate in line with the guidance and direction of the Department of Education
- keep a contact log to help with contact tracing
- ensure staff engage with the induction / familiarisation briefing provided by the Department of Education
- implement the agreed procedures to be followed in the event of someone showing symptoms of COVID-19 while at school
- provide instructions for staff and pupils to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during school time
- implement cleaning in line with Department of Education advice

All school staff will be consulted on an ongoing basis and feedback is encouraged on any concerns, issues or suggestions.

Scoil Mhuire Reopening of schools and Response plan

We are delighted to welcome our pupils back to Scoil Mhuire and a special welcome to our new junior infants. A lot of work has been carried to ensure safe return of all our pupils to school.

School will be different but it will still be a special welcoming place for all our pupils. To this end we have put plans in place a safe return for all.

Only one entrance/exit to the school building is available.

The pupils will enter through the main gate in the carpark and walk to the top of the one way walk system where they will be collected by teachers.

School will re-open for all pupils on Tuesday 1st September 2020

Some of the measures that have been put in place to ensure a safe return to school.

Week beginning Monday 17th August

- ISM meeting to plan for reopening of school and to response plan in place. Decisions on written homework and uniforms. Wednesday would be no uniform day.
- Model of classroom layout with 1 metre distancing Room 15
- Cleaners in school for two weeks for deep cleaning.
- Portawash stations and sanitiser unit delivered to school and demonstration for principal and caretaker.
- Cleaning materials, wipes, cloths, tissues purchased for all staff
- Marking of Carpark with one way walk system and social distancing
- Documentation and questionnaire sent to staff
- Email sent to parents on return to school protocols and documentation on DES website.
- Sanitiser and visors collected.

Week beginning Monday 24th August

- ISM meeting to finalise response plan
- Return to work questionnaire
- Staff training day Tuesday 24th August
- Clearing of classrooms
- Classroom layout
- Encourage all staff members take some time for themselves and their families this week.

Week beginning Monday 31st August

- Monday – all staff on site to finalise arrangements
- Tuesday – welcome children back to school

Usual School Hours

- 8.50 – 1.30p.m. Junior and Senior Infants
- 8.50 – 2.30p.m. 1st to Sixth

Parents will not have access to school

Staggered Drop Off and Collection Times

All children will be collected in the carpark and brought into the school by teachers. We have a one way walk system in the carpark. Gates will be opened at 8.50am and pupils will arrive on a staggered timetable.

Unfortunately, it will not be possible for parents/guardians to come onto the school grounds before/after school. To minimise the risks, and to help us to maintain social distancing, the children may not come onto the school grounds before the school doors open at 8.50a.m.

Morning:

All class teachers will be in their classrooms by 8.50a.m.

Parents are asked to 'drop and go' in the car park anytime between 8.50a.m. and 9.10a.m.

Children will go directly to their classrooms on arrival. Other staff members (including Special Education Teachers, SNAs and the Principal) will be available outside and inside the building to receive the children and to help them to their classrooms

Entry in the morning in alphabetical order (Surname)

ENTRY TIMES:

Entry to school in alphabetical order for all pupils (Surname). Please see below for Junior Infant times.

Morning:

Surname:	A-H	8.50am
	I-M	9.00am
	N-Z	9.10am

Afternoon:

Senior Infants

Surname:	A-H	1.10pm
	I-M	1.20pm
	N-Z	1.30pm

1st -6th Class

Surname:	A-H	2.10pm
	I-M	2.20pm
	N-Z	2.30pm

For the first two weeks in September Junior Infants will be in school from 9.30am to 11.30am.

Morning:

Surname:	A-H	9.30am
	I-M	9.40am
	N-Z	9.50am

Collection:

A-H	11.10am
I-M	11.20am
N-Z	11.30am

From 14th September Onwards:

Junior Infants will operate the same timetable as Senior Infants. Entry in the morning in alphabetical order (Surname)

Surname:	A-H	8.50am
	I-M	9.00am
	N-Z	9.10am

Afternoon:

Surname:	A-H	1.10pm
	I-M	1.20pm
	N-Z	1.30pm

This system will apply rain, hail or shine so please make sure that your child comes to school prepared for the weather!

Summarised Timetable for Drop Off and Pick Up:

8.50	All staff to be present to support arrival of pupils Class teachers and SNA to be in their classrooms SEN and Principal to support arrival of pupils
9.10 – 9.40	Arrival of pupils – Stop, Drop, Go system. No adults past yellow line. Children wash hands at Portawash and then go straight to their classrooms on arrival.
11.10-11.30	Stop, pick up go – Junior Infants
1.10-1.30	Stop, pick up, go – Senior Infants
2.10-2.30	Stop, pick up go – 1 st to 6 th

Break Times

The DES guidelines state that the risk of transmission from contact with outside surfaces or play areas is low.

Bearing in mind that everyone will be coming and going through the Front Door, the yard space the children will use is based on how far they will have to travel through the building to get there.

The pupils will have two different breaks times. Each break will be fifteen minutes and the pupils will be in zoned areas in the yard so that they stayed in their class bubbles.

A rota will be organised based on Class Bubbles so that only half the school is in the yard at a time. Each of the yards has been divided in to marked zones for the pupils to play in.

Changes to Classroom and School Layout and to School Routines

The DES guidelines recognise that a common-sense approach is needed in our Primary schools. To that end, every effort will be made to limit interaction within classrooms, to limit contact between class groups and to limit the sharing of common facilities.

The children and their teachers will work in Class Bubbles. A Class Bubble is a grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible. The aim of the system within the school is that class groupings mix only with their own class from arrival at school in the morning until the children go home at the end of the school day.

Team Teaching/Special Education Teachers/Special Needs Assistants

Staff members (particularly Learning Support Teachers and SNAs) can rotate between areas/classes but this will be minimized where possible. When rotation occurs, agreed sanitising routines will be observed.

In keeping with our Special Education policy, learning 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 as far as possible, within the confines of a bubble.

- 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 tables and chairs in SET rooms will be wiped clean in between different pupils or small groups attending.

Junior Infants to Second Class

It is recognised that younger children are unlikely to maintain physical distancing indoors so there is no requirement for children from Junior Infants to Second Class to maintain a physical distance within their Class Bubble.

Third Class to Sixth Class

Children from Third Class to Sixth Class will be arranged in Pods within their Class Bubbles, with a maximum of 6 pupils per Pod. As far as possible, each Pod will be at least 1 metre distance from the next Pod. All unnecessary furniture will be removed from these classrooms to create as much space as possible.

Corridors and Stairwells

Briefly passing someone in a hall is very unlikely to contribute significantly to the spread of infection if people do not have physical contact and avoid informal group discussions.

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

Additional Measures to Limit Interactions

Children will go straight to their classrooms from the yard and will not congregate in the corridors or hallways.

While we will all be delighted to see each other again, hand shaking and hugging will not be allowed.

Doors and Windows

Where practical, all internal doors will be left open to minimise hand contact with common surfaces.

To ensure that classrooms are well ventilated, windows will be kept open as often as possible, and will be opened while children are taking breaks in the playground.

Timetables will be drawn up so that only one class group at a time is present in the toilet block.

Lunches

Mams and Dads must make sure that children bring their lunches to school to avoid adults having to come to the school during the day. Please remind your children not to share their food or drinks with other children. Only give children what they can eat without help.

Children will eat their lunches at their desks, as per our usual practice.

Books, Copies, Pencils, etc.

Children should use their own books, pens, pencils, etc. and as far as possible should not share with other pupils. These items will all stay in school as there will be no written homework for the first while.

Uniforms/Tracksuits

There is no guidance or advice to say that school uniforms or tracksuits should be washed every day and this is probably not practical for most families.

Uniforms or tracksuits can be worn on Monday and Tuesday and every Wednesday is a No Uniform Day and tracksuit or uniform can be worn on Thursday and Friday.

As a school we strongly advise that children should wear their school 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.

Office

A contactless payment system has been set up to minimise the amount of cash that needs to be handled. Parents/Guardians are asked to co-operate in helping to keep school staff safe by arranging for contactless payments through the school office. Information on this will be sent to you by email.

Physical Education and P.E. Equipment

Physical Education lessons will take place outside when the weather allows.

Staff members and pupils may take additional breaks outside during the school day. All classes are encouraged to participate in 'The Daily Mile'.

Teaching and Learning

As a staff, we are very aware that the children have been away from school since March 12th. We appreciate the time and effort that went into Home Learning, and we recognise the challenges that Home Learning presented for all families.

Each child will be at a different place in relation to his/her learning, and we wish to assure you that staff will take that into consideration when planning for Teaching and Learning during the 2020/2021 school year.

The Department of Education and Skills has published Curriculum guidelines for us, and we ask you to trust our experience and professional expertise as we work with all the children during the return to school.

Supporting the Learning of Children Who Cannot Attend School

If a child is not able to attend school for an extended period of time **due to a medical condition** the class teacher (and/or the Special Education Teacher, where relevant) will provide work to support the child's learning at home and this will be shared with parents/guardians.

Wellbeing of the School Community

We will work on the recommended five principles to support the wellbeing of all our pupils and staff. These are promoting:

- A sense of safety
- A sense of calm
- A sense of belonging and connectedness to school
- A sense of self-efficacy and school-community efficacy
- A sense of hope

Our usual practice is to provide support to pupils based on what is known as the Continuum of Support. This is a tiered system that provides Whole School and Classroom Support for all pupils, additional School Support for some pupils, and School Support plus extra targeted intervention for a few pupils with complex needs.

The Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Staff members are not required to wear PPE. However, for a limited number of staff, 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
- Where a suspected case of COVID-19 is identified while the school is in operation
- Where staff are particularly vulnerable to infection but are not on the list of those categorised as people in very high-risk groups or may be living with those who are in the very high-risk category.

Appropriate PPE will be available for dealing with suspected COVID-19 cases, intimate care needs and for first aid. Where staff provide healthcare to children with medical needs in the school environment, they will apply standard precautions as per usual.

Masks

The children are not required to wear masks or face coverings.

The guidelines do not recommend that staff wear masks or face coverings as these would hide facial expressions and make communication with the children more difficult. Visors will be provided to staff members who wish to wear them.

Gloves

There is no need for the children to wear disposable gloves. They are considered inappropriate under the guidelines.

Staff members do not need to wear disposable gloves unless they are looking after a pupil's intimate care needs or administering First Aid.

There will be an emphasis on hand hygiene rather than on the wearing of disposable gloves.

Hygiene and Cleaning

Mobile sanitiser dispensers have been installed throughout the school e.g. at each entrance, in each classroom.

Water and soap is available in all the cloakrooms, and at each sink in the classrooms, staff bathroom and staff room. **We have mobile Portawash Units are available outside main door to facilitate hand washing before entry into school**

Hand hygiene will be promoted and encouraged, and parents/guardians are asked to support the school in reinforcing this message.

In accordance with the DES guidelines, the school will be thoroughly cleaned at least once per day. Particular attention will be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, handrails, chairs/arm rests, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities.

All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area. Under no circumstances should these cleaning materials be removed from the building. Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day.

Waste will be collected regularly from offices and other areas within the school.

Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.)

Illness and Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19

We love to see all of our children at school every day. However, under the current circumstances, parents/guardians must keep children at home if they display any Covid-19 Symptoms. <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/symptoms.html>

Staff must not attend school if they display any symptoms.

A designated isolation area has been created in the school.

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, the following procedure will be implemented:

- The pupil will be accompanied to the isolation area. A distance of 2 meters will be maintained. If this is not possible, the person accompanying the child must wear a face covering.
- If a pupil has a suspected case, parents/guardians will be contacted immediately by telephone. To help us in this regard, Mams and Dads are asked to make sure that their contact details are kept up to date at all times.
- Staff members who are symptomatic should immediately inform the Principal/Deputy Principal and go home.
- The staff member or child who is symptomatic should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects.
- If the staff member/child is well enough to go home, arrangements will be made for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible.
- Anyone who is symptomatic is advised to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used to travel home.
- If the staff member/child is too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a Covid-19 suspect.

The isolation area and work areas will be thoroughly cleaned in line with the guidelines.

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 and staff and pupil confidentiality is essential at all times.

It is important to remember that any of us can get sick or unwell, and if we do, we need understanding and support from those around us. It is essential that anyone who feels unwell makes that known to the Principal/Deputy Principal as soon as possible.

COVID-19 Related Absence Management

COVID-19 related absences will be managed in line with agreed procedures with the Department of Education.