

Updated Covid 19 Response Plan

Ballinagare NS

This Response Plan is a Working Document which has been drawn up in conjunction with various documents and circulars from the HSE and gov.ie which contain all the elements required for the safe reopening of all primary schools.

Ballinagare NS original Covid -19 response plan was designed in Aug 2020 and updated in March 2021. The school was required to update the schools COVID-19 response plan again in **August 2021** in advance of the reopening of the school following the summer holidays.

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 Ballinagare 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.

Before the return to school the school, management will ensure:

- 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.
- The current RTW form as supplied by the DES in August 2021 will be completed and returned to the school before returning to work by all school staff. Ballinagare NS request staff (verbally or in writing) to confirm that the details in the pre-return to work form remain unchanged following subsequent periods of closure such as school holidays.
- Advise staff and pupils not to return to or attend school if they are identified by the HSE as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 or if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus.
- Follow Advice from the Dept. of Foreign Affairs re travelling outside of Ireland
- Advise staff and pupils to 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 in the school
- All staff have been reminded of the cleaning schedule which includes cleaning of frequently touched surfaces
- Communicate with parents via email regarding HSE advice, update of this policy, DE Posters for Parents re returning to school in August 2021, video for parents of children in various classes, A Parent's Guide to Close Contacts
- Ensure sufficient PPE is available and in particular that surgical / medical grade masks must be available for SNA's / SET teachers (Masks conform to EU EN 14683)

To prevent Introduction and Spread of COVID-19 in Schools the revised measures are included in our response plan:

All adults **must wear a face mask** upon entering school grounds/property. Staff are supplied with medical grade masks as advised by DES

We ask that there be **no congregating** in the 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.

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.

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 to the class teacher or school office.

Access to the school building will be in line with agreed school procedures.

- As outlined previously 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 Ballinagare 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.
- A 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 and the Chairperson of the BOM 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

Hand / Respiratory Hygiene

Hand sanitiser 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 sanitiser will not be stored or used near naked flame

Pupils and staff 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.

Physical Distancing

Staff have been advised of the Department's guidance to achieve effective physical distancing

Physical distancing falls into two categories:

- Increasing separation
- Decreasing interaction

Ballinagare NS has followed where possible DES guidance and referred to the suite of illustrative classroom layouts of potential options to maintain effective physical distancing.

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 2 provides that good ventilation can be achieved in classrooms without causing discomfort, particularly during cold weather.

Portable CO2 Monitors from Lennox Laboratories were received and installed A rota is followed for equal distribution of monitors.