



SN Tulach Uí Chadhain

COVID-19 Response Plan

Introduction & Rationale

This policy was drawn up in consultation with parents staff and management of Scoil Náisiúnta Tulach Uí Chadhain. It details the school's response in relation to COVID-19 and the safety measures put in place for the safety of the school community

Aims:

This policy aims to:

- To raise awareness of the symptoms of COVID-19
- To outline the safety measures put in place to ensure the safety of the school community
- To provide clarity around the procedures in place so that children, parents and staff can feel comfortable in returning to school

Symptoms of COVID-19

COVID-19 is an illness affecting the lungs and airways. The main symptoms are:

- A fever (high temperature- 38 degrees Celsius or above)
- A new cough- this can be any kind of cough, not just dry.
- Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- Loss or change in your sense of smell or taste- this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal
- Fatigue
- Aches and pains

Control Measures

The Board of Management of SN Tulach Uí Chadhain are fully committed to the following safety measures in relation to COVID-19.

Lead Worker Representative

As part of the school's response to COVID-19 the staff of SN Tulach Uí Chadhain have selected Majella Fahy as Lead Worker Representative and Neasa Connolly as Deputy Lead Worker Representative. The LWR will work in collaboration with school management to assist in the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of COVID -19 and monitor adherence to those measures and to be involved in communicating the health advice around COVID-19 in the workplace.

Return to Work

All staff will be required to fill out the Return to Work form prior to returning to school. They will also be required to complete online training modules as provided by the Department of Education and Skills. Staff will be required to confirm (verbally or in writing) that the details in the pre-return to work form remain unchanged following subsequent periods of closure such as school holidays.

Prevent Introduction

The most effective way of ensuring the wellbeing and safety of all pupils and staff is to prevent the introduction of the disease into the school. As such the following measures have been introduced to that end:

- All activities involving instructors, trainers or teachers outside of school staff will operate in accordance with current public health advice and Covid Safety protocols
- School swimming lessons will be temporarily postponed
- To the greatest extent possible entrants in to the school should be restricted to pupils, teachers and visiting instructors (if appropriate) only
- All visitors should be by prior appointment
- Any students or staff experiencing any of the above symptoms should stay at home until advised otherwise by their GP.
- Any students or staff deemed a close contact with a case *or a suspected case* should stay at home until deemed safe to return
- Any students or staff who have been abroad should not return to school until they have adhered to the latest Government protocols on self-isolation
- To the greatest possible extent, communication between parents and teachers should be by phone or email. Where face to face interaction is necessary social distancing and good hygiene must be implemented. PPE will also be available.
- All staff and pupils 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 in the school.

Arrangements for Access to school building by visitors

In the case that it is necessary for a visitor to come to the school the following procedures will apply

- All visitors should make an appointment to visit the school by email or phone call prior to arrival
- Visitors must fill in the contact tracing log on arrival and return this form to the principal or deputy principal
- All visitors should sanitize on their way in to the building
- All visitors must check in directly to the principal
- All visitors must maintain 2m social distancing from all school staff and students
- In the event that a parent needs to leave something for a student to the school, they should call in advance and inform the school and an area for drop off will be available inside the school door. School staff will ensure that this then gets passed on to the appropriate student.

- In the event of needing to meet face to face with a teacher, parents should make a prior appointment and arrangements will be made by school staff to ensure that all appropriate protocols are adhered to.
- Visits to the school should be kept to those that are absolutely necessary and for business that is not appropriate to be conducted by phone call or email

Absence Management

SN Tulach Uí Chadhain recognises that levels of absenteeism will be higher than normally deemed acceptable while the country deals with the threat of COVID-19. The following protocols are in place to deal with this increase

- Every effort will be made to ensure that children do not miss out academically due to needing to isolate in relation to COVID-19
- In appropriate circumstances elements of remote learning may be utilised.
- Parents should ensure to notify the school if a child is absent for COVID-19 related precautions
- All absences will still be recorded but a note will be kept to signify the reason
- It should be noted that currently the school is still required to notify Tusla should a child miss more than 20 days in a school year. It is expected that due consideration would be given to the number of these related to COVID-19
- Staff absences due to COVID-19 procedures will be provided for in accordance with circular 0049/2020

Increased Hygiene Measures

- All entrants to the school will be required to sanitize on their way in to the building. There will be sanitizing stations at each entrance and posters reminding entrants to do so and outlining best practice
- Each classroom will have a sanitizing station. School students and staff will sanitize their hands on the following six occasions
 - on arrival at school
 - before eating or drinking
 - after using the toilet
 - after playing/being outdoors
 - after coughing or sneezing
 - when hands are physically dirty (must be washed)
- Posters showing how to ensure and the importance of respiratory etiquette will be placed around the school
- All bathrooms have been fitted with appropriate soap, paper towel and toilet roll dispensers.
- It is NOT recommended that young children have independent supplies/use of alcohol gels.

Social Distancing

The following measures are in place with regards to social distancing within the school

- All staff should maintain a minimum of 2m social distance from each other and any other visitor to the school. This includes at break time when using the staff room facilities
- Social contact (eg. handshaking) should be avoided
- Teachers will not unnecessarily come into close contact with students although it is accepted that it will be unavoidable at certain circumstances during the school day. Where it happens, it should be brief and only when absolutely necessary.
- Where a teacher or member of staff must be close physical contact with any student for a prolonged period of time, appropriate PPE should be worn
- Students from 3rd class to 6th class will operate in pods during the school day. Pods will also be used where appropriate in younger classes.
- Contact between pods will be avoided where at all possible
- Sharing of materials and resources between pods will be avoided. Where it is necessary that this should happen then materials will be sanitised between use.
- Procedures around arrival and leaving school each day are in place. Every effort should be made to maintain social distance at these times and congregation of any kind should be avoided.
- Children will not mix with children from another classroom at any stage during the day
- There is NOT a requirement to social distance during break times
- Each classroom will be given a designated area of the outside space to play and must remain in the space.

Ventilation

- Classroom doors and windows will be fully opened before children arrive, while children are outside at breaktimes and at the end of the school day
- When it is deemed appropriate and does not incur undue discomfort from cold the windows will be partially open while pupils are in the classroom.

Cleaning Procedures

- All teachers will be provided with cleaning materials to clean as needed during the school day
- All unnecessary clutter will be removed or boxed away to facilitate ease of wipe down of easily reached areas daily
- All common touch surfaces will be sanitized daily
- All materials that may be shared between individuals, pods or classrooms should be sanitized between use
- A checklist for enhanced cleaning will be provided to cleaning staff
- All cleaning will be signed off on daily and checked by the principal or LWR

Procedure in the event of suspected cases

- Child/children will be moved to a predetermined isolation area in the school office
- The child will be provided with a mask
- Parents will be contacted immediately
- No other children other than those displaying symptoms need isolate or be sent home at this stage
- A pupil must remain at home until they have no symptoms or have been given the all-clear by their GP
- 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 school setting
- **The school has a responsibility to the confidentiality of all pupils, parents and staff. It cannot share information about suspected cases. In the event a member of the school community tests positive for COVID-19 the HSE will take the necessary steps with regard to contact tracing and contacting close contacts as necessary.**

Personal Protective Equipment

- PPE is required in the following instances as per DES and HPSC guidelines:
 - When a physical distance of 2m cannot be maintained
 - assisting with intimate care of pupils
 - administering first aid
 - if there is suspected case of covid 19
 - when in close contact with someone vulnerable or those living with someone in the very high risk category
- Face shields, and masks will be stocked in the school for use when necessary.
- Medical grade masks will be provided to those needing to provide intimate care or for those dealing with a suspected case.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management:

- To ensure that the appropriate COVID-19 Response Plan is in place and regularly reviewed
- To ensure that all necessary physical alterations are made to the school premises
- To ensure that appropriate Department issued checklists are followed in preparation for school reopening (see appendices)
- To ensure the necessary steps have been taken to ensure enhanced cleaning regimes in the school
- To ensure that all practicable steps have been taken to reduce the risk of COVID-19 on school premises

Staff

All staff must:

- Adhere to the School COVID-19 Response Plan and the control measures COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of primary and special schools
- Complete the RTW form before they return to work.
- Must inform the principal if there are any other circumstances relating to COVID19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to facilitate their safe return to the workplace.
- Must complete COVID-19 Induction Training and any other training required prior to their return to school.
- Must be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices.
- Coordinate and work with their colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained.
- Make themselves aware of the symptoms of COVID-19 and monitor their own wellbeing.
- Self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any symptoms of COVID-19.
- Not return to or attend school if they have symptoms of COVID-19 under any circumstances.
- Not return to or attend school if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus.
- Comply with latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel
- Cooperate with any public health personnel and the school for contact tracing purposes
- Undergo any COVID-19 testing that may be required in the school as part of mass or serial testing as advised by Public Health.
- If they develop any symptoms of COVID-19 whilst within the school facility, they should adhere to the procedure outlined above.
- Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.

Ratification and Review

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 24/08/2020 and updated in September 2021

The policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parent's Association.

Signed _____


Professor Peter Dockery
Chairperson, Board of Management

13-9-2021 Date

Signed _____


Brian MacLochlainn
School Principal

13-9-2021 Date



Scoil Náisiúnta Tulach Uí Chadhain

Return to School - Protocols and Procedures for Parents

In order to facilitate a safe return to school, parents are asked to adhere to the following general guidelines:

- ✓ Adhere to the School COVID-19 Response Plan and the control measures outlined below
- ✓ Ensure that your updated contact information is provided to the school prior to your child returning to school
- ✓ Ensure your child is aware of, and encouraged to use good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices
- ✓ Keep their child at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if their child or any member of their household display **any** symptoms consistent with COVID-19.

Symptoms are:

- A fever (high temperature- 38 degrees Celsius or above)
 - A new cough- this can be any kind of cough, not just dry.
 - Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
 - Loss or change in your sense of smell or taste- this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal
 - Fatigue
 - Aches and pains
- ✓ Do not send your child to school if they have been identified as a close contact of a positive case.
 - ✓ **Do not send your child to school if they have symptoms of COVID-19 under any circumstances.**
 - *The usual rewards for full attendance will not take place this year.*
 - ✓ If the school feels that a child is exhibiting **any** symptoms of COVID-19, you will be contacted and asked to bring your child home immediately
 - ✓ **All families must adhere to HSE guidelines in relation to self-isolation following travel outside of Ireland.**

Control Measures

The following are a list of control measures that have been put in place to manage the risk of transmission of Covid-19 within the school. The best protection is still to avoid its introduction in the first place so all parents must be vigilant around any symptoms and keep their child at home if they have any doubts.

1. Arrival at School

- ❖ There is a naturally staggered arrival at school in normal circumstances so a staggered start and drop off time is not necessary.
- ❖ Visitors, including parents, are asked not to come into the school building other than in the case of having a prior appointment with a member of staff. Children are to be dropped off at the front door or front gate.
- ❖ Parents of children in the Junior Room (Múinteóir Maura) can drop their children (of that room only) at the side door leading directly to the classroom. All other children must enter through the front door
- ❖ Children will go directly to their classroom and sit at their own desk, regardless of whether class has started or not.
- ❖ All visitors will be required to sign the contact tracing log before entering and when leaving the school building
- ❖ All visitors will be required to check in with Múinteóir Brian on arrival
- ❖ Children do NOT need to sign the contact tracing log on their way in.
- ❖ All entrants to the school must sanitize on their way in
- ❖ Parents should remain at a 2M distance from all other adults while dropping or collecting children or meeting a teacher and avoid congregating.
- ❖ If a child forgets any items, there will be a drop off space inside the main door. Please ring the school to let us know you are dropping an item and we will ensure your child receives it
- ❖ If you wish to collect your child early, again please contact the school in advance and we will have the child ready for collection

2. *Leaving School*

- ❖ Naíonáin should be picked up via side door of the school.
- ❖ Parents should wait outside and maintain social distance.
- ❖ At the 2:30 pick up children will be led outside to a designated area to await pick up
- ❖ Children must wait with their class and not at the gate
- ❖ Students who are walking home or who normally walk to their car without their parents will be permitted to do so and should go immediately once they have told their teacher.
- ❖ Once parents come to the wall of the school children can go out to them.
- ❖ No adults should enter the school building
- ❖ The gateway should be left clear to allow for children to pass through
- ❖ On wet days children will stay in their rooms until called by a member of staff once their parent arrives
- ❖ Parents are asked to come to the wall/yard to signal their arrival
- ❖ Teachers will manage the flow of children going out
- ❖ Older students who are walking home or who normally walk to their car without their parents will be permitted to do so

3. *Procedures and Protocols during school.*

- ❖ Each room will have sanitizing stations
- ❖ Children will not be on corridors unless going to/from Special education classrooms or the bathroom/cloak room in the case of the senior room.
- ❖ Staff and pupils will use hand sanitiser/wash hands on the following 6 occasions:
 - on arrival at school
 - before eating or drinking
 - after using the toilet

- after playing/being outdoors
- after coughing or sneezing
- when hands are physically dirty (must be washed)
- ❖ Teachers will manage flow of children at sanitizing stations and hand washing stations to avoid congregation
- ❖ It is NOT recommended that young children have independent use of alcohol gels
- ❖ Children from different classroom will not mix from the time they arrive at school to the time they go home
- ❖ Within classrooms children will be organised in class pods where necessary of 4-6 pupils
- ❖ Each pod will be a minimum of 1m away from other pods
- ❖ Any group work will take place within pre-existing pods
- ❖ Children will not move between pods during the course of the day and changes in personnel between pods will be limited to occasions where deemed necessary for behavioural, educational or wellbeing issues
- ❖ Sharing educational material between pods will be avoided
- ❖ At a minimum all classroom windows will be opened at all breaktimes and at other times during the day where weather permits
- ❖ Social physical contact will be avoided (handshakes, hugs etc)
- Teachers and staff will maintain 2m physical distance with any parent, guardian or essential visitor to the school
- Teachers will endeavour to maintain 1m social distance from students however some level of close contact will be necessary on occasion throughout the day.
- Close face to face contact will be avoided where possible.
- Each classroom will have a designated area of yard in which to play during breaktime and should stay in that area
- There is NOT a requirement for children to social distance during break if outside

- Movement out to and back from breaks will be managed to avoid mixing between classroom groups
- Any sporting equipment used during break will be designated to particular classrooms and used only by them
- During wet breaks inside children will be asked to remain with their own pod at their own desk
- We would ask that you ensure children come with appropriate clothes for the weather as we will try to get children outside for break times as much as possible
- Play equipment used will be separated for use by individual pods and cleaned and sanitized as necessary

4. Classroom materials/resources

Stationery – Please ensure that children have all the stationery supplies they need as sharing and borrowing will need to be avoided. Having a set of stationery that remains in school and one that remains at home, while not required, may help with ensuring that children always have what they need.

Art – Where possible pupils will have their own individual art and equipment supplies.

Electronics – Shared electronic devices such as tablets will be cleaned between use

Library Policy – Children will be allowed to borrow library books. When finished these will be left out of circulation for a couple of days and wiped down before being replaced

Shared Sports Equipment – We will minimise equipment sharing and clean shared equipment between uses by different people.

5. Procedure in the event of suspected cases

- Child/children will be moved to a predetermined isolation area in the school office
- The child will be provided with a mask
- Parents will be contact immediately
- No other children other than those displaying symptoms need isolate or be sent home at this stage

- A pupil must remain at home until they have no symptoms or have been given the all-clear by their GP
- **The school has a responsibility to the confidentiality of all pupils, parents and staff. It cannot share information about suspected cases. In the event a member of the school community tests positive for COVID-19 the HSE will take the necessary steps with regard to contact tracing and contacting close contacts as necessary.**

6. PPE

- PPE is required in the following instances as per DES guidelines:
 - assisting with intimate care of pupils
 - administering first aid
 - if there is suspected case of covid 19
 - when in close contact with someone vulnerable or those living with someone in the very high risk category
 - when physical distance of 2m cannot be maintained
- Face shields, and masks will be stocked in the school for use.

7. Uniform/Coats

- ❖ There is no extra risk of transmission from the continued use of uniforms. If the situation arises that a case occurs in the school certain students may be excused from wearing a uniform while they wash theirs. In all other cases a uniform should be worn.

8. Meetings with Teachers

- ❖ Face to face meetings with teachers will only be where it is essential to do so.
- ❖ Where possible please communicate with teachers by telephone or email.
- ❖ Where a face to face meeting with a teacher is essential it will be organised in line with social distancing guidelines and PPE will be available
- ❖ Further arrangements will be made in relation to parent-teacher meetings at a later date depending on the health and safety situation at that time.

9. Remote Learning

- ❖ In the case of a school closure the school will implement a remote learning plan. This will involve online daily classes and remote support through Seesaw
- ❖ Time will be spent in the first few weeks of the new year in familiarising students with some elements that may be in use in the event of remote learning
- ❖ **All use of ICT and online platforms should be done in accordance with the school's Acceptable Use Policy.**

Return to School - Protocols and Procedures for Teachers

The following are control procedures to be followed in addition to those outlined in the document for parents. To ensure clarity I have not duplicated procedures around pods etc here so please ensure you are familiar with both documents.

Control Measures

10. Arrival at School

- ❖ Fill out a return to work form in advance of returning to work
- ❖ **Do not come to school if you or someone in your household has any symptom relating to Covid-19. Arrangements have been made for teachers leave in the event of isolation in response to Covid. These can be read in circular 0049/2020.**
- ❖ Complete online training prior to return to work as provided by the Department of Education and Skills if you have not already done so

11. Leaving School

- ❖ Ensure class is ready to go home on time to avoid the need for congregation of parents outside
- ❖ Walk class to designated area outside at the end of the school day
- ❖ Manage the departure of pupils on wet days, sending them out when their parent signals their arrival at the front of the school.

12. Procedures and Protocols during school.

- Ensure that any unnecessary clutter is boxed and stored to facilitate ease of cleaning/wipe down each day.
- Remove any unnecessary furniture from your room to allow enough space for social distancing protocols

- Allow time at the end of each day for students to wipe down their desks and chairs
- Wipe down your own work area/desk
- Manage the flow of children to sanitizing stations to avoid congregation at particular points during the day
- Spend time in the first few weeks teaching the procedures and protocols to children to ensure that everyone is clear on what is expected
- Maintain social distance with other staff members
- Avoid the need for children to come into contact with children from other pods within the classroom
- Ensure hands are sanitized when handling students work for correcting
- It is acceptable and inevitable that some close contact with students will happen on occasion during the school day but this should be kept to a minimum and only on occasions when it is absolutely necessary.
- Any kitchen utensils used are put directly into the dishwasher
- Sanitize hands before using any shared surface
- Email or use Seesaw to distribute work to children who are isolating at home as soon as possible.

13. Classroom materials/resources

- ❖ Avoid sharing of equipment between pods
- ❖ Provide a box for children to return library books and return these to the leabharlann each Monday
- ❖ Ensure any IT equipment is wiped down before and after use
- ❖ Be cognisant of the need to avoid unnecessary sharing of equipment and materials when planning lessons, particularly art.

14. Procedure in the event of suspected cases

- Child/children will be moved to a predetermined isolation area in the school office
- The child will be provided with a mask

- Parents will be contact immediately
- No other children other than those displaying symptoms need isolate or be sent home at this stage
- A pupil must remain at home until they have no symptoms or have been given the all-clear by their GP

15. PPE

- PPE is only required in the following instances as per DES guidelines:
 - assisting with intimate care of pupils
 - administering first aid
 - if there is suspected case of covid 19
 - when in close contact with someone vulnerable or those living with someone in the very high risk category
 - When social distance of 2m cannot be maintained
- Face shields, and masks will be stocked in the school for use when necessary.

16. Meetings with Parents

- ❖ Regularly check your school email for communication from parents
- ❖ If necessary organise meetings with parents, respecting social distancing guidelines
- ❖ Communicate with parents via email and telephone unless absolutely necessary to have a face to face meeting

17. Teaching and Learning

- ❖ Spend the necessary time teaching children the new routines and procedures in place in the school
- ❖ **It may be necessary to have in place work packs/emails etc. that can be sent at short notice to families that need to isolate or in the event of your absence.**