

Covid 19 Response Plan – Mullaghbuoy NS

September 2021



Introduction

This Covid-19 Response Plan is designed to support the staff and Board of Management (BOM) in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of Covid-19 in Mullaghbuoy NS.

The Covid-19 Response Plan details the policies and practices necessary for our school to meet the Government's 'Return to Work Safely Protocol', the Department of Education and Skills' plan for school reopening and to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in the school environment. The plan incorporates current advice about measures to reduce the spread of Covid-19 in the community issued by the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE). (NPHE).

It is important that the resumption of school-based teaching and learning and the reopening of school facilities comply with the protocol to minimise the risk to students, staff and others. As the advice issued by NPHE continues to evolve, this protocol and the measures management and staff need to address may also change.

This response plan will support the sustainable reopening of our school where the overriding objective is to protect the health of staff and pupils while promoting the educational and development needs of the children in the school. In line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol, the key to a safe and continued return to work, and re-opening of our schools requires strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between the Board of Management, staff, pupils and parents/guardians.

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The assistance and cooperation of all staff, pupils, parents/guardians, contractors and visitors is critical to the success of the plan. Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information provided in this document. However, should errors or omissions be identified, please notify us so that appropriate measures can be taken to rectify same.

Note: This plan is a live working 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.

1. School Profile

School Name	Mullaghbuoy NS
Address	Riverstown, Dundalk, Co. Louth A91 H319
Roll Number	02793B
Contact Phone No.	042 9376202
Email/Website	mullaghbuoyns@gmail.com www.mullaghbuoyns.com
Chairperson Board of Management	Fr Malachy Conlon Email: malachycooley@eircom.net
Teaching Staff 2021-2022	Teachers: 4 Mrs Egan: Junior & Senior Infants (Principal) Ms Mc Carragher: 1 st , 2 nd & 3 rd Class (AP II) Ms Mc Parland: 4 th , 5 th & 6 th Class (Deputy Principal) Ms Ryan: SET (Special Education Teacher) SNAs: 2

	N Mc Gee D Mc Glynn
Ancillary Staff	School Secretary (Part Time): Grace Traynor Cleaner: Alice Mc Cann
Covid 19 Lead Worker Representatives	Ms Joanne Mc Carragher (LWR) Ms Aideen Mc Parland (Deputy LWR)
Total Number of Pupils	66

2. Mullaghbuoy NS COVID-19 Policy

The following COVID-19 policy outlines our commitment as a school to implement the plan and help prevent the spread of the virus. The policy will be signed and dated by the Principal and Chairperson of the Board of Management and brought to the attention of staff, pupils, parents/guardians and others.

COVID 19 Policy Statement

Mullaghbuoy NS 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 COVID19 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 hand-washing 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 and Skills

- ❖ keep a contact log to help with contact tracing
- ❖ ensure staff and pupils engage with the induction / familiarisation briefing provided by the Department of Education and Skills
- ❖ 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 and Skills advice
- ❖ All school staff will be consulted on an ongoing basis and feedback is encouraged on any concerns, issues or suggestions. This can be done through the Lead Worker Representative: **Joanne Mc Carragher**

Signed: Fr Malachy Conlon, Chairperson BOM

Mairéad Egan, Principal

Date: 3rd August 2020

3. Planning and Preparing for Return to School

The Board of Management aims to facilitate the resumption of school-based teaching and learning and the return to the workplace of staff. The return to school must be done safely and in strict adherence to the advice and instructions of public health authorities and the Government.

a. School Buildings

In preparation of the re-opening of our school the following have been checked:

- ✓ Water System
- ✓ School equipment
- ✓ Bin collections and other essential services
- ✓ Security system including doors
- ✓ Entry/Exit Pathways

b. Signage

We will be required to display signage outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene. Posters will be on display in prominent areas such as the office, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilets.

4. Procedure for Returning to Work and School (RTW)

In order to return to the workplace, staff must complete an updated Return to Work (RTW) form, which is available electronically or from the Principal. A hard copy is attached also at Appendix 1. A RTW form should only be completed at least 3 days prior to any proposed date of return to the workplace. On receipt of the completed form the Principal will provide details of the Induction Training for completion by staff prior to the return to the workplace and details of any additional health and safety measures in place in the school to facilitate the staff member's return to the school facility.

In order to return to school, parents/guardians need to complete the Return to Education Form (Appendix 4) in respect of children returning to school and after any absence from school.

5. Return to Work Safely and Lead Worker Representative

Responsibility for the development and implementation of the Covid-19 Response Plan and the associated control measures lies primarily with the Board of Management and the School Leadership. The Return to Work Safely protocol provides for an agreed procedure between management and staff to appoint a Lead Worker Representative to carry out a specific role. The role of the worker representative is to ensure that Covid-19 measures are adhered to in the workplace as follows:

- Work collaboratively with the employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19.
- Promote good hygiene practices such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette along with maintaining social distancing in accordance with public health advice.
- Assist with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace.
- Monitor adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.
- Make representations on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.
- If a staff member has any concerns or observations in relation to the Covid-19 Response Plan and control measures or the adherence to such control measures by

staff, parents/guardians, contractors or visitors, he/she should contact the lead worker who will engage with the Principal/BOM.

Name of Lead Worker representative: **Joanne Mc Carragher**

(jmccarragher@mullaghbuoyns.com)

Name of Deputy Lead Worker representative: **Aideen Mc Parland**

(admin@mullaghbuoyns.com)

All staff, parents/guardians, contractors and visitors have a responsibility both as individuals and collectively to have due regard for their own health and safety and that of others and to assist with the implementation of the Covid-19 Response Plan and associated control measures.

6. Safety Statement and Risk Assessment

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment. A risk assessment to identify the control measures required to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 in school settings has been completed and this documentation available along with the Covid-19 policy on our school website. We have reviewed our emergency procedures and risk assessments to consider any new risks that arise due to the school's COVID-19 Response Plan. We have also reviewed our existing risk assessments and documented any changes required.

7. General advice to prevent the spread of the virus

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms.

Common Symptoms of coronavirus include:

- ✓ **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 or distortion of taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.**
- ✓ **Fatigue**
- ✓ **Aches and Pains**

Other Uncommon Symptoms of coronavirus include:

- ✓ Sore throat

- ✓ Headaches
- ✓ Runny or stuffy noses
- ✓ Feeling sick or vomiting
- ✓ Diarrhoea

Infection with the virus that causes COVID-19 can cause illness, ranging from mild to severe, and, in some cases, can be fatal. It can take up to 14 days for symptoms to show. They can be similar to symptoms of cold and flu. If you have any symptoms of COVID-19 (coronavirus), self-isolate (stay in your room) and phone your family doctor straight away to see if you need a free COVID-19 test. Getting an early diagnosis means, you can get the help you need and take steps to avoid spreading the virus, if you have it. For the complete list of symptoms, please refer to the HSE Website. Symptoms may be subject to change so regular review of the HSE Website is advised. If you do not have symptoms, you can get a free COVID-19 (coronavirus) test at a COVID-19 walk-in test centre.

COVID-19 Tracker App COVID Tracker app is a free and easy-to-use mobile phone app that will:

- alert you if you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 (coronavirus)
 - keep other app users safe by alerting them if you test positive for COVID-19
 - give you advice on what to do if you have symptoms
- (You can download the free app from Apple's AppStore or the GooglePlay store.)

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our school, we must minimise the risk of introduction of the disease into the school setting in the first place. We aim to minimise the risk through the following measures:

- Parents/guardians to complete a Return to Education Form for child returning to school after any absence.
- Awareness of COVID-19 and its symptoms will be promoted amongst staff, pupils, parents/guardians and visitors.
- Staff and parents/guardians and/or pupils who have symptoms of COVID-19 (see list above) or other acute infectious diseases will be advised not to attend school, to phone their GP and follow the HSE guidance on self-isolation.

- Staff and parents/guardians and/or pupils who have been identified by the HSE as contact of a person with COVID19 should follow Public Health advice and contact their doctor immediately.
- Staff and parents/guardians and /or pupils who live with someone who has symptoms of the virus should follow Public Health advice and contact their doctor immediately.
- Staff and parents/guardians and/or pupils who have travelled outside of Ireland should follow the relevant Public Health advice at that time.
- Staff and pupils will know what to do if they develop symptoms at school.
- Everyone entering the school building will be required to perform hand hygiene with hand sanitiser and wear masks if applicable.
- Visitors to school during the day will be by prior arrangement and will be received at a specific contact point.

Staff, pupils and visitors will at all times adhere to the up-to-date advice and instructions of the public health authorities in relation to protecting oneself and others against the risk posed by the Covid-19 virus. Updated advice from the HSE is available on its website –

<https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>

Mullaghbuoy NS will arrange for all updated advice from the Department of Education and Skills to be circulated to staff, pupils and visitors in a timely manner.

8. Managing the risk of spread of COVID-19

a. Wash your Hands Frequently

Regular hand washing with soap and water is effective for the removal of COVID-19.

Follow the HSE guidelines on handwashing.

For advice from HSE on how to wash your hands the following link will be helpful:

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

There is a requirement for access to hand washing facilities after activities that are likely to soil hands, for example playing outside or certain sporting activities as hand sanitiser does not work on dirty hands.

b. Hand Hygiene and Hand Sanitisers

Hand hygiene can also be achieved using hand sanitisers (when hands are clean). They will be available at entry and exit points and in each classroom.

Alcohol-based sanitiser must not be stored or used near heat or naked flame.

Frequency of Hand Hygiene:

- 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.

c. Avoid Touching Eyes, Nose and Mouth

Why? Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth.

d. Physical Distancing

Physical distancing is recommended to reduce the spread of infection in our school.

Junior Infants to Second Class: It is recognised that younger children are unlikely to maintain physical distance 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 with as much space being created as possible.

Physical Distancing will be achieved in two ways: -

- I. ***Increasing Separation.*** This will be achieved by re-configuring the classrooms to maximise physical distancing. Each classroom 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. This is to facilitate speedy contact tracing in the event of Covid-19 exposure.

Bubble 1: Mrs Egan's classroom

Bubble 2: Ms Mc Carragher's classroom

Bubble 3: Ms Mc Parland's classroom

- II. ***Decreasing Interaction.*** This will be achieved by decreasing the potential for children from different bubbles to interact. There are assigned routes for each bubble to enter and exit the school and to access their classrooms. Bubbles have different zones within the playground for all breaktimes and playtime will be managed to ensure there is no interaction between the bubbles.

Generally speaking the objective is to limit contact and sharing of common facilities between people in different Class Bubbles (and Pods within those Class Bubbles) as much as possible, rather than to avoid all contact between Pods, as the latter will not always be possible.

The aim of the system within the school is that class grouping mix only with their own class from arrival at school in the morning until departure at the end of the school day. The Pods within those Class Bubbles is an additional measure, to limit the extent of close contact within the Class Bubble. Pod sizes should be kept as small as is likely to be reasonably practical in the specific classroom context.

To the greatest extent possible, pupils and teaching staff should consistently be in the same Class Bubbles, although this will not be always possible.

Sharing educational material between Pods should be avoided/minimised where possible. Staff members who move from class bubble to class bubble should be limited as much as possible.

Additional measures to decrease interaction include:

Limit interaction on arrival and departure and in hallways and other shared areas. Social physical contact (hand to hand greetings, hugs) should be discouraged. Where pupils need to move about within the classroom to perform activities (access to a shared resource) it should be organized to the greatest degree possible to minimize congregation at the shared resource. Staff and pupils should avoid sharing of personal items. Encourage pupils to avoid behaviours that involve hand to mouth contact (putting pens/pencils in the mouth). Where

teaching and learning involves use of keyboards or tablets, the contact surface of the device should be cleaned regularly and hand hygiene encouraged.

Drop Off and Collection Routine:

School Hours

For the first two weeks of term 1 Junior Infants will start at 9.20am and finish at 12 noon and thereafter at 9.20am – 2pm.

1st Class – 3rd Class 9.20am – 3pm

4th Class – 6th Class 9.10am – 2.50pm.

Morning Arrival

1st- 6th Class:

To help with reducing contact at the school gate parents/guardians are requested not to approach the school with children. Pupils should walk from the carpark to the gates at the front of the school alone and in accordance with their Bubbles. They must enter the school via the front door nearest their classroom.

Bubble 3: 4th Class – 6th Class ~ 9.10am

Bubble 2: 1st Class – 3rd Class ~ 9.20am

Junior and Senior Infants (Bubble 1):

Pupils will enter through the top gate and back door of school at 9.20am. There will be staff at both points of entry to ensure the smooth entry of the pupils and to alert parents/guardians when children can proceed.

Any child who comes to school by bike will be asked to leave their bike in the bike shed and wait for the entry of their Bubble at their assigned gate.

Afternoon Dismissal

Bubble 1: Mrs Egan will bring Junior and Senior Infants to the top school gate at home time. Parents/guardians may come to the gate to collect their child on a one at a time basis.

Bubble 2 & Bubble 3: Ms Mc Parland will dismiss her pupils on a pod-by-pod basis at 2.50pm. Ms Mc Carragher will dismiss her pupils on a pod-by-pod basis at 3pm. Pupils will leave the school on the same route they used on arrival and will be supervised on leaving the school site.

*Please Note – parents/guardians should observe social distancing at all times when dropping off and collecting.

Staff

A distance of 2m is recommended for physical distancing by staff.

This is particularly relevant to distancing between adults when they are not engaged in teaching such as the staff room and arriving to work. If 2m cannot be maintained in staff groups, as much as distance as is possible and updated guidance on face covering should be observed.

Physical distancing should be observed between staff members within the staff room through the use of staggered breaks etc.

Staff meetings should be held remotely or in small groups or in large spaces to facilitate physical distancing. Implement no hand shaking policy. Minimise gathering of school staff at the beginning or end of the school day.

Staff can rotate between areas/classes but this should be minimized where possible.

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 provides that good ventilation can be achieved in classrooms without causing discomfort, particularly during cold weather. The Department has also published guidance regarding how these practical measures can be supplemented and enhanced by the use of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) monitors. Links to all aforementioned guidance can be accessed [here](#).

e. Practice respiratory hygiene

Everyone should ensure that they and the people around them follow good respiratory hygiene. This entails:

- Covering the mouth and nose with a tissue or your bent elbow when coughing or sneezing.
- Disposing of the used tissue immediately in the designated bins in every classroom and office.
- Always wash hands after coughing or sneezing and/or disposal of used tissue.

By following good respiratory hygiene, we protect the people around us from viruses such as cold, flu and Covid-19. Good hygiene practices and washing our hands properly and regularly can help stop the spread of the virus. It is, therefore, crucial that all staff and pupils adhere to this advice and adopt the following practices as strictly as possible.

In Summary:

Do

- ✓ Wash your hands properly and often
- ✓ Cover mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing and sneezing
- ✓ Put used tissues into a bin and wash your hands
- ✓ Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

Do Not

X Touch eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean

X Share objects that touch mouth – for example, bottles, cups, cutlery, etc.

f. People at Very High Risk (Extremely Vulnerable):

Current public health guidelines have identified groups who are defined as being at very high risk. The HSE has set out these groups, which include people who:

- are over 70 years of age - even if you're fit and well
- have had an organ transplant
- are undergoing active chemotherapy for cancer
- are having radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
- have cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
- are having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
- are having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors

- have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
- severe respiratory conditions including cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, pulmonary fibrosis, lung fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and severe COPD
- have a condition that means you have a very high risk of getting infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell)
- are taking medicine that makes you much more likely to get infections (such as high doses of steroids or immunosuppression therapies)
- have a serious heart condition and you are pregnant

The advice for this group is available from the HSE. Staff who are in this group should self-declare on the Return to Work form if they believe that they are at very high risk. Details of the leave arrangements that will apply will be updated by the Department of Education and Skills. If the Board/Principal is unsure whether staff fall into the very high risk category, advice will be sought from the Occupational Health Service.

9. Control Measures

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/guardians and visitors as far as possible within the school.

These control measures shall continue to be reviewed and updated as required on an ongoing basis. It is critical that staff, pupils, parents/guardians and visitors are aware of, and adhere to, the control measures outlined and that they fully cooperate with all health and safety requirements.

Staff should note that they have a legal obligation under Section 13 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 to comply with health and safety requirements and to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves, their colleagues and other parties within the workplace.

The following control measures have been put in place:

a. Return to Work Form

Staff will be required to complete the revised RTW form at least 3 days prior to any return to the school facility (see section 2 above). The purpose of the RTW form is to get confirmation

from staff that, to the best of his/her knowledge, he/she has no symptoms of Covid-19 and is not self-isolating or cocooning or awaiting the results of a Covid-19 test.

b. Induction Training

All staff will undertake and complete Covid-19 Induction Training prior to returning to the school building. The aim of such training is to ensure that staff have full knowledge and understanding of the following:

- Latest up to-date advice and guidance on public health
- Covid-19 symptoms
- What to do if a staff member or pupil develops symptoms of Covid-19 while at school
- Outline of the Covid-19 response plan

Staff will be kept fully informed of the control measures in place in the school and their duties and responsibilities in preventing the spread of Covid-19 and with any changes to the control measures or guidance available from the public health authorities.

If a staff member is unsure about any aspect of the Covid-19 Response Plan, the associated control measures, or his/her duties, he/she should immediately seek guidance from the Principal.

Note: Induction Training for reopening schools in the new school year will be developed by the Department in consultation with stakeholders and made available for all schools and staff.

c. Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

It is crucial that all staff, pupils, parents/guardians, contractors and visitors are familiar with, and adopt, good hand and respiratory hygiene practices.

Guidance documentation and Information posters will be available at various locations within the school facility. Information posters will be prominently displayed at appropriate locations within the school facility including offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilet areas. Such are intended to inform but also remind everyone about the importance of hygiene in preventing the spread of Covid-19 virus and protecting health and safety.

Handwashing facilities and/or hand sanitisers are available at multiple locations within the school:

- There will be a hand sanitising station at each entry door.

- All locations are equipped with sinks, running water, soap and paper towels for drying.
- All locations are equipped with pedal bins for contaminated waste.
- All children from 3rd to 6th class will be required to have their own hand sanitiser.

d. Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE will not be required to be worn within the school facility according to current occupational and public health guidance. 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.

Such include roles where:

- Performing intimate care
- Where a suspected case of Covid-19 is identified while the school is in operation

Appropriate PPE will be available for dealing with suspected COVID-19 cases, intimate care needs and for first aid. This will be updated in line with advice from the HPSC (Health Protection Surveillance Centre). Where staff provide healthcare to children with medical needs in the school environment, they should apply standard precautions as per usual practice. Medical grade masks will be made available to those staff by necessity that need to be in close and continued proximity with pupils with intimate care needs.

Face Coverings:

It is not recommended that children attending primary school wear face-coverings.

It is now a requirement for face coverings to be worn by staff members where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres from other staff, parents/guardians, essential visitors or pupils.

Cloth face coverings should not be worn by any of the following groups:

- Any person with difficulty breathing
- Any person who is unconscious or incapacitated
- Any person who is unable to remove the face-covering without assistance
- Any person who has special needs and who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the face covering, for example persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, sensory concerns or tactile sensitivity.

Primary school children will not be required to wear face coverings **except** in the following situations:

1. Where a child is showing symptoms of Covid-19 and is able to wear a mask
2. Where there is a parental request for a child to wear a mask at school

Cloth face coverings act as a barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from travelling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the face coverings coughs, sneezes, talks or raises their voice. Cloth face coverings are therefore intended to prevent transmission of the virus from the wearer (who may not know that they are infected) to those with whom they come into close contact.

In certain situations, the use of clear visors should be considered, for example staff interacting with pupils with hearing difficulties or learning difficulties.

e. Medical Grade Masks

Schools must provide medical grade masks in the EN14683 category to all SNAs and teachers in special schools and special classes and those staff by necessity that need to be in close and continued proximity with pupils with intimate care needs including School Bus Escorts.

Wearing a face covering or mask does not negate the need to stay at home if symptomatic.

f. Wearing of Gloves:

The use of disposable gloves in the school setting by pupils or staff is not appropriate. It does not protect the wearer and may expose others to risk from contaminated gloves. Routine use of disposable gloves is not a substitute for hand hygiene. However, for a limited number of staff, gloves will need to be used occasionally due to the nature of certain work activities such as performing intimate care.

g. Aprons

Aprons may also be appropriate in certain circumstances including for intimate care needs or for staff assigned to cleaning an area where a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 was present.

h. Cleaning

Arrangements for more regular and thorough cleaning of areas and surfaces within the school have been made. There will be a cleaner available to the school every day after school hours. Regular and thorough cleaning of pupil and staff working areas, communal areas and frequently touched surfaces shall be conducted. All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area. Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day. There will be regular collection of used waste disposal bags from bins. Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.).

i. Access to the school building /contact log

A secure door system has been installed in the school. This will operate with a code for staff and via intercom for visitors. Arrangement for necessary visitors such as contractors and parents/guardians will be restricted to essential purposes and limited to those who have obtained prior approval from the principal.

The prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a crucial step in restricting the spread of the virus and protecting the health and safety of the individuals themselves and other staff and pupils, contractors and visitors. A detailed sign in/sign out log of those entering the school facilities should be maintained. The school should maintain a log of staff and pupil contacts. In addition, see visitor contact log at Appendix 2.

j. First Aid/Emergency procedure

The standard First Aid/Emergency procedure shall continue to apply in Mullaghbuoy NS. In an emergency or in case of a serious incident, call for an ambulance or the fire brigade on 112/999. Contact the principal or nearest first aider giving details of location and type of medical incident.

k. Shared Resources

Pupils and staff will sanitise their hands before and after use of any shared resources and shared devices. The resources themselves will also be sanitised after use; this will include shared books/readers which will be placed in a sealed box for 72 hours between uses.

l. Belongings

Children should use their own books, pens, pencils, etc. and as far as possible should not share with other pupils.

- Junior Infants & Senior Infants: The school will provide all pencils, pens, colours etc necessary for use in school
- 1st- 6th Class pupils will avail of the normal set of stationery in school. However, each pupil should take in a pencil case with their required items (colours etc.) that will stay in school and have a pencil case for home.
- All books and equipment (e.g. geometry set) brought in by pupils on the first day of the school term should be clearly labelled with the pupil's name and will be for their use only. School rental books have been sanitised and will be left on the pupil's desk for their use only.

Pupil belongings should be kept to a minimum.

m. Uniforms

There is no guidance or advice to say that school uniforms should be washed every day and this is probably not practical for most families. We will follow our usual practice in relation to uniforms. Full Uniforms should be worn on all days apart from PE day.

When dressing every morning please consider that rooms will be well ventilated. Windows and doors will be kept ajar. Vests and layers may be appropriate. Please note that we will be endeavouring to get out for break times onto the yard daily. Please ensure your child always has a raincoat at school and a pair of socks in a plastic zip-lock bag with them to school.

As a school we strongly advise that children wear their school uniforms only for school related activities. Uniforms should be taken off straight after school for the day. They should not be worn in after-school facilities, shops, during after-school activities, etc.

It is advised that the pupils of Junior Infants – 1st Class should wear Velcro shoes to minimise the need for laces and close physical contact for adults.

n. Communication

- Communication will be made with parents/guardians via Aladdin email or text service and/or telephone.

- Please ensure that we have up-to-date contact information for parents/guardians and emergency contacts including work, particularly if you are in an area where mobile coverage is poor.
- Meetings between parents/guardians and staff can only take place by prior arrangement via the office on 042 9376202, Monday 9.10 -12 noon, Tuesday 9.10 – 3pm, Wednesday 9.10 – 12 noon and Friday 9.10am – 3pm. Outside this time please email school at mullaghbuoyns@gmail.com. Any change in these arrangements will be communicated to you.
- The staff member will in the first instant call you back to discuss any issues arising.
- All communication must go through the office or by email.

o. Cloakrooms and Toilets

Each bubble has their own cloakroom and their own toilet facilities. Cloakrooms and toilets will be accessed by pupils on ‘one at a time’ basis.

p. Photocopying

Any staff member who uses the photocopier must sanitise their hands before and after use and clean it down after use with the wipes provided.

q. ICT Equipment

A timetable will be drawn up for the use of common ICTs. Devices should be cleaned after use and before they are returned to the charging trolley.

r. Visiting Teachers/Coaches

Consideration will be given to the use of the field and community hall in the provision of limited accessibility to external coaching/teaching. A risk assessment will be undertaken accordingly.

s. Substitute Teachers and Substitute SNAs

A copy of the Covid-19 Response Plan will be provided to each substitute teacher/SNA. Substitutes will be required to complete a Return to the Workplace form before they enter a classroom and will be asked to confirm that they have engaged in the online Induction training.

t. Physical Education and P.E. Equipment

Physical Education lessons will take place outside when the weather allows. Any P.E. equipment used must be sanitised after use.

u. Parent/ Teacher Meetings

We typically arrange our Parent/Teacher Meetings for the middle of the first term. This academic year's Parent/Teacher Meetings have already taken place.

v. Staffroom

All staff members should maintain a physical distance of 2 metres when they are not engaged in teaching e.g. when they are using the staffroom and arriving to work. If 2 metres cannot be maintained in staff groups, face coverings should be worn. Staff meetings will be held remotely or in small groups in large spaces to facilitate physical distancing. Staff members should avoid sharing utensils in the staffroom as far as possible.

10. Impact of COVID-19 on certain school activities

Choir/Music Performance

Choir practices/performances and music practices/performances involving wind instruments may pose a higher level of risk and special consideration should be given to how they are held ensuring that the room is well-ventilated and the distance between performers is maintained.

Sport Activities

Schools should refer to the HPSC guidance on Return to Sport. Link to return to sport protocols is found here:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/07253-return-to-sport-protocols/>

Special Educational Needs

Additional considerations for those with Special Educational Needs:

For children with special educational needs (SEN) maintaining physical distancing in many instances will not be practical or appropriate to implement. The focus should therefore be on emphasising that parents/guardians should have a heightened awareness of signs, symptoms or changes in baseline which suggests illness/COVID-19 infection and where symptoms are present children should not attend school.

Similarly, staff should be aware of their responsibility not to attend work if they develop signs or symptoms of respiratory illness.

Hand hygiene

Children who are unable to wash their hands by themselves should be assisted to clean their hands using soap and water or a hand sanitiser (if their hands are visibly clean) as outlined previously.

Equipment

Some children may have care needs (physical or behavioural) which requires the use of aids and appliances and/or medical equipment for example toileting aids, moving and handling equipment, respiratory equipment. Where cleaning of aids and appliances is carried out in the school it is recommended that a cleaning schedule is provided, detailing when and how the equipment is cleaned and the cleaning products to be used in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions.

The following points can guide the development of such cleaning schedule:

- Equipment used to deliver care should be visibly clean;
- Care equipment should be cleaned in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions. Cleaning is generally achieved using a general purpose detergent and warm water.
- Equipment that is used on different children must be cleaned and, if required, disinfected immediately after use and before use by another child e.g. toileting aids;

If equipment is soiled with body fluids:

- First clean thoroughly with detergent and water;
- Then disinfect by wiping with a freshly prepared solution of disinfectant;
- Rinse with water and dry.

11. Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19

Staff or pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19. The following outlines how Mullaghbuoy NS will deal with a suspected case that may arise during the course of work:

- A designated isolation area is identified within the school building. The designated isolation area is behind a closed door and away from other staff and pupils. In the event of having more than one person displaying signs of Covid-19 we have identified a separate designated isolation area.

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while in Mullaghbuoy NS the following are the procedures to be implemented:

- If the person with the suspected case is a pupil, the parents/guardians should be contacted immediately
- Isolate the person and have a procedure in place to accompany the individual to the designated isolation area via the isolation route, keeping at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic person at all times
- Provide a mask for the person presenting with symptoms if one is available. He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises
- Assess whether the individual who is displaying symptoms can immediately be directed to go home/be brought home by parents/guardians and call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home
- Facilitate the person presenting with symptoms remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and facilitate them calling their doctor. The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects.
- Advice should be given to the person presenting with symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bag provided
- If the person is well enough to go home, arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible and advise them to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used.
- If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a Covid-19 suspect.
- Carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery
- Arrange for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.
- The HSE will inform any staff and parents/guardians 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 confidentiality is essential at all times.

11. Staff Duties

Staff have a statutory obligation to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of their colleagues and other parties. In order to facilitate a safe return to work, these duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Adhere to the School Covid-19 Response Plan and the control measures outlined. The cooperation and assistance of all staff is essential to reduce the risk of spread of Covid-19 and to protect health and safety as far as possible within the school. All staff have a key role to play.
- 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 Covid19
- Do not return or attend school if they have symptoms of Covid-19
- If they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus, contact their GP and follow Public Health advice.
- In instances of foreign travel, staff are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice.
- If they develop any symptoms of Covid-19 whilst within the school facility, they should adhere to the procedure outlined above
- Complete the RTW form before they return to work
- Must inform the Principal if there are any other circumstances relating to Covid-19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to facilitate their safe return to the workplace
- As a new staff member, 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
- Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.
- Undergo any COVID-19 testing that may be required as part of mass or serial testing as advised by Public Health

12. Covid related absence management

The management of a COVID-19 related absence will be managed in line with agreed procedures with the Department of Education.

13. Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

Support for school staff wellbeing will be provided by Department Support Services including the PDST and CSL, as well as by the HSE's Health Promotion Team.

An Occupational Health Strategy is in place as a supportive resource for staff in schools. The aim of the Occupational Health Strategy is to promote the health and wellbeing of employees in the workplace, with a strong focus on prevention.

The Occupational Health Strategy comprises the Employee Assistance Service and the Occupational Health Service. The Employee Assistance Service (EAS) is provided by Spectrum Life under the logo of 'Wellbeing Together: Folláinne Le Chéile'.

A free-phone confidential helpline 1800 411 057 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and staff members are encouraged to make use of the service when the need arises.

Where required, short-term counselling is available to employees and their families (over the age of 18 years and living at home).

The EAS also provides advice and support to managers and delivers interventions to help them deal with health and wellbeing issues in the workplace.

A bespoke wellbeing portal and app is available which offers access to podcasts, blogs, live chats and videos on topics around wellbeing and mental health, family life, exercise and nutrition. E-Learning programmes across mental health, sleep and a range of wellbeing topics are also available. In addition online cognitive behavioural therapy is provided. As part of the services provided by Spectrum.Life a Mental Health Promotion Manager is available to develop and deliver evidence based mental health and wellbeing initiatives to reduce stigma and improve mental health literacy and to increase engagement with the service. Spectrum.Life also provides a series of webinars and presentations to promote wellbeing in schools.

14. Whole School Wellbeing

The Board of Management aims to protect and support the health and wellbeing of all pupils and staff (physical, mental, spiritual etc.), whether in the school facility or at home. The

Board of Management is mindful that the support and promotion of pupil and staff health and wellbeing is particularly important in the current context where the Covid-19 pandemic has caused considerable challenges for, and disruption to, people's personal, family and social lives. The Board of Management aims to foster a culture that supports healthy behaviours and wellbeing. The Board of Management shall continue to make health and wellbeing tools and guidance available to the school as well as organising suitable support programmes, initiatives and events.

These are challenging times for everyone. Should a staff member experience any stress or anxiety in respect of work or work arrangements, he/she should feel free to speak to the principal. 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.

We will be 'Slowing Down to Catch Up'. A major focus of the reopening of our school will be on supporting the school community's well-being. The following websites have been recommended by the Department of Education as e-mental health services, including online counselling, provided by the HSE/HSE-funded service providers including, <https://spunout.ie/>, <https://jigsaw.ie/>, <https://mymind.org/>, <https://www.childline.ie/> & <https://turn2me.ie/>.

Every new adaptation or change of this Response Plan will be in line with:

- DES/Government requirements and regulations
- A common sense approach
- PRIORITISING pupil and staff wellbeing

Appendix 1: Revised Return to Work Form**Return to Work Form**

This form must be completed by staff in advance of returning to work.

If the answer is Yes to any of the below questions, you are advised to seek medical advice before returning to work.

Name: _____
 Name of School: _____
 Name of Principal: _____ Date: _____

	Questions	YES	NO
1.	Do you have symptoms of cough, fever, high temperature, difficulty breathing, loss or change in your sense of smell or taste now or in the past 14 days?		
2.	Have you been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection in the last 14 days?		
3	Are you awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test?		
4	In the past 14 days, have you been in contact with a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19?		
5	Have you been advised by a doctor to self-isolate at this time?		
6	Have you been advised to restrict your movements at this time?		
7	Have you been advised to cocoon at this time? Note: if you are at very high risk (extremely vulnerable) from COVID-19 you may be advised to cocoon.		

I confirm, to the best of my knowledge that I have no symptoms of COVID-19, am not self-isolating or awaiting results of a COVID-19 test and have not been advised to restrict my movements.

Please note: The school is collecting this sensitive personal data for the purposes of maintaining safety within the workplace in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The legal basis for collecting this data is based on vital public health interests and maintaining occupational health and this data will be held securely in line with our retention policy.

Signed: _____

Appendix 2: Visitor Contact Log

COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of primary and special schools

Appendix 5 Contact Tracing Log

Name of School				School Contact Person	
Address of School				For Queries only: Phone No	
				Email	
Name of Visitor					Was the visit pre-arranged with the Principal? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Date of Visit	___ / ___ / _____	Time	Entry to school _____ am <input type="checkbox"/> pm <input type="checkbox"/>		Exit from School _____ am <input type="checkbox"/> pm <input type="checkbox"/>
Visitor Status	Contractor <input type="checkbox"/>	Parent/Guardian <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/> Please complete: _____		
Contact details of visitor	Company Name (if applicable)				
	Address				
	Contact No.		Email Address		
	Reason for Visit				
Who the visitor met (separate line required for each person the visitor met)					
Name of Person visited					Length of time spent with each person in the school

Appendix 3: Parents/Guardians Essential Back to School Checklist

Parents/Guardians Essential Back to School Checklist

- ✓ Are you familiar with the bubble and pod system in place for class time and break time?
- ✓ Have you taught your child correct hand hygiene?
- ✓ Have you taught your child coughing and sneezing etiquette?
- ✓ Have you labelled items all in your child's bag?
- ✓ Have you familiarised yourself with the symptoms of Covid-19?
- ✓ If your child is unwell are you aware that you must keep them home?
- ✓ Are you familiar with the drop off and collection procedure?
- ✓ Are you familiar with the response plan should a child be suspected of having Covid-19?
- ✓ Are you confident with how to make contact with school given that visits to school will not be permitted?
- ✓ Have you ensured the school has current and correct contact information for guardians and emergency contacts?
- ✓ Have you filled in and submitted the Return to Education form?

Appendix 4: Return to Educational Facility Parental Declaration Form



Return to Educational Facility Parental Declaration Form

Child's Name:	Manager's Name:
Parents/Guardian's Name:	
Name of Setting:	
<p>This form is to be used when children are returning to the setting after any absence.</p>	
<p>Declaration: I have no reason to believe that my child has infectious disease and I have followed all medical and public health guidance with respect to exclusion of my child from educational facilities.</p>	
<p>Signed _____</p>	
<p>Date: _____</p>	