

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST BNS COVID-19 SCHOOL RESPONSE PLAN For All The School Community - September 2021



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Lead Worker Representative/Deputy LWR

Bríd Callanan (LWR)

Julianne Ryan (D-LWR)

The LWR/D-LWR works in collaboration with the Principal/BOM 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.

School Profile

- Approximately 285 pupils - all boys
- 12 Mainstream classes & 1 Special Class (Seomra na Rí)
- 7 Special Education Teachers
- 1 Shared SET with Tankardstown NS (1 day a week - Tuesday)
- 1 Shared SET with girls' school (45 mins twice a week)
- 1 English As Additional Language (EAL) teacher
- Administrative Principal
- 7 full time SNAs (includes 2 in Seomra na Rí)
- 2 shared secretaries
- 1 shared caretaker
- 3 Cleaners

Update on works completed over the summer months

- New marmoleum in two classes - Room 8 and Room 10
- Upgraded security camera and monitoring system
- Front walls powerwashed and thanks to our Parent Association - gates & noticeboard painted.
- Special Education room divided in two
- Main building update - tenders received and tender report being compiled by the consultant to be sent to the Department of Education. Estimated start of construction - Jan/Feb 2022.

Human resources allocated through additional funding from DES

- Deputy Principal – 10 Leadership and Administration Days - to be confirmed.

PPE, consumables & equipment

- Hand sanitiser station at each entry/exit point
- Hand sanitiser station in each room
- Soap dispenser in each toilet
- Z-fold paper towels and dispenser in each toilet
- Pedal bins in each toilet and classroom

- Centrefeed Blue Roll in each teaching area
- Visor for each staff member
- Disposable aprons/masks/overshoes available as required
- Food safe antibacterial sanitiser spray in each teaching area
- Signage - outlining signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and to support good hand & respiratory hygiene

Reopening date - Senior Infants to Rang 6

Wednesday 1 September arriving between 9 and 9.20am directly to classes.

Reopening date - Junior Infants

Junior Infants arrive between 9.45 and 10am & stay until 12pm from Weds 1 September to Tuesday 14 September inclusive.

Note that Junior Infants are in every day & that special arrangements will be put in place for the first day. This will be communicated directly to Junior Infant parents.

From Weds 15 September, Junior Infants will be in school until 2pm each day.

Revised school hours (including dropoff and collection arrangements)

9.20am-2pm - **Junior Infants* & Senior Infants**

(*See previous section for Junior Infant times for the first two weeks)

9.20am-2.45pm **1st, 2nd, 3rd & 4th classes**

9.20am-3pm **4th, 5th & 6th classes**

*To help with reducing the amount of traffic around the school gates, children are asked to walk/cycle/scoot to school if it is at all possible. **This system will apply rain, hail or shine so please make sure that your child comes to school prepared for the weather.***

Dropoff in the morning - times

The children may not come onto the school grounds before 9am under any circumstances to minimise risk, and to help us to maintain physical distancing within our class bubbles on school property.

As a further precaution, families are requested to stagger their arrival based on the information below.

Times: 9.00-9.10am - Families with a **surname** from **A-L**

9.10-9.20am - Families with a **surname** from **M-Z**

Collection in the afternoon

Times:

Junior Infants collected at 12pm until Tuesday 14 September & then at 2pm from Weds 15 September onwards

Senior Infants collected at 2pm

1st, 2nd & 3rd classes at 2.45pm

4th, 5th & 6th classes at 3pm

Entry & Exit Doors (colour coded)

- Classes will enter and exit via the same doors/gates unless otherwise stated below.
- From 9am, children **ONLY** are to enter the school grounds (Junior Infant parents will be permitted onto the grounds in the morning for the first two weeks only). All boys go directly to their classrooms.
- At collection, only parents **from Junior Infants, Senior Infants, First Class &**, if necessary, **Seomra na Rí** are permitted on the school grounds.

Room 1 Junior Infants (Miss Sinéad Kelly) - Main door (Door A) (red dots @ collection)

Room 2 Senior Infants (Mrs Alison Laffan) - Fire door into Room 2 close to main door (Door B) (blue dots @ collection)

Room 3 Senior Infants & First Class (Ms Rebecca Curry) - Fire door into Room 3 (Door C) (Senior Infants, green dots @ collection. First Class, blue dots @ collection)

Room 4 First Class (Mrs Brid Callanan) - Outside door at top end of the school near top gate (Door D) *Note that Mrs Callanan's First Class will exit the school via (Door A) (red dots)

Room 5 Second Class (Mrs Kathleen Bane) - Outside door at top end of the school near top gate (Door D)

Room 9 Third Class (Ms Jennie O'Farrell) - Main Door (Door A) *Note that Ms O'Farrell's Third Class will exit the school via the top gate

Room 12 Fourth Class (Mr Pat Molloy) - Outside door at senior end of the school (Door E)

Room 8 Fifth Class (Mr Cathal Barrett) - Main door (Door A)

Room 13 Fifth Class (Ms Caitríona Crosse) - Outside door at senior end of the door (Door E)

Room 10 Sixth Class (Ms Aoife Hall) - Outside door at senior end of the school (Door E) *Note that Ms Hall's Sixth Class will exit the school via **Door A**

Room 11 Sixth Class (Mr Laurence Coskeran) - Outside door at senior end of the school (Door E)

SEOMRA NA RÍ pupils (Ms Katie Cowan) - Main Door (Door A)

(Door F) - for use by certain classes to go out to the playground.

A morning supervision timetable will be in place.

Staff members (including class teachers, Special Education Teachers, SNAs and the Principal) will be available inside and outside the building to receive the children and to help them to their classrooms.

Remember, children will go directly to their classrooms on arrival.

Staggered breaktimes

Breaks will be staggered & pupils will remain within their class bubbles during breaks. We have **six** separate & distinct spaces that the boys will play in outside.

10.50-11.10am (BREAK 1)	11.20am-11.40am (BREAK 1)
12.30-12.50pm (BREAK 2)	1pm-1.20pm (BREAK 2)
Junior Infants (Space 1)	Third Class (Space 1)
Senior Infants (Space 2)	Fourth Class (Space 2)
Senior Infants & First Class (Space 3)	Fifth Class (Space 3 & 4)
First Class (Space 4)	Fifth Class (Space 3 & 4)
Second Class (Space 5)	Sixth Class (Space 5)
	Sixth Class (Space 6)

Yard supervision

A rota will be organised based on Class Bubbles and the SETs allocated to those classes.

Class teachers - Junior Infants, Senior Infants, First, Second and SETs allocated to those classes to work together.

Class teachers - Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth Classes and SETs allocated to those classes to work together.

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.

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. They will, however, be in pods/groups as is normal in a younger class setting. **These pods will change at least monthly or earlier if deemed necessary by the class teacher.**

Third Class to Sixth Class

Children from Third Class to Sixth Class will be arranged in pods within their class bubbles, with as few as possible pupils per pod. As far as possible, each pod will be at least 1 metre distance from the next pod. All furniture deemed unnecessary has been removed from these classrooms to create as much space as possible. **These pods will change at least monthly or earlier if deemed necessary by the class teacher.**

UPDATED/REVISED SEATING PLANS MUST BE PROVIDED TO THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

General Purpose (GP) Room

The GP Room will not be used for assemblies.

PE will be outdoors as much as is possible and practical. We will review indoor PE as the term progresses.

If & when required, the space outside the door of the GP hall will be our COVID-19 isolation area/sick bay.

Assemblies

There will be no daily assembly in the school halla. Daily and/or weekly school assemblies will be held remotely.

Corridors

We will observe our usual practice of keeping to the **left** when walking on the corridors. There will be signs on the corridor floors to assist/remind.

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

Additional measures to limit interactions

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

Hand shaking and hugging will not be allowed for now.

Doors and Windows

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

Windows should be opened when children are singing as a group, or when they are playing musical instruments.

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

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 DES intends to supply schools with a number of Co2 monitors to help us get a general indication of areas/rooms that may not be adequately ventilated.

School bags

All books, copies and stationery as per book list must be brought in your son's school bag on their first day back and they can continue to bring school bags into school every day.

Lunches

Parents/guardians 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.

Children will eat their lunches at their desks, as per our usual practice. **Lunchboxes and water bottles must be washed thoroughly every evening.**

Books, Copies, Pencils, etc.

Children must use their own books, pens, pencils, etc. and must not share with other pupils. All of your son's items must be labelled.

Children will be asked to leave their pencil case in school on the first day.

If teachers lend pencils etc to a pupil, they will need to be wiped down upon return.

Coats and Toilets

Individual class arrangements will be put in place regarding the procedures for storing coats. Children can, if required, collect their coats in their pods/groups.

Individual class arrangements will be put in place regarding the procedures for going to the toilet. Maximum of two from the same pod in the toilet at any one time.

Homework

Homework will commence from Monday 13 September. The time before this will be used to familiarise and refamiliarise the boys & staff with our various online platforms.

Uniforms/Tracksuits

According to health advice provided by the HSE Health Protection Surveillance Centre there is no health issue regarding the wearing of school uniforms. Therefore, our existing school policy will apply.

Pupils in **Infants, First Class and Second Class** will wear school tracksuit on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and will wear grey uniform on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Pupils in **Third Class, Fourth Class, Fifth Class and Sixth Class** will wear grey uniform on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and will wear tracksuit on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

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 for the day. We recommend that uniforms are washed regularly.

Teaching and Learning

We have our own plans in place for each curriculum area for this academic year. We will make decisions around tin-whistle and GAA coaching as the year progresses.

Team Teaching/Special Education Teachers/Special Needs Assistants

- Staff members (particularly SETs and SNAs) can move between areas/classes but this will be minimised where possible. When rotation occurs, agreed sanitising routines will be observed.
- In keeping with our Special Education policy, special education teaching 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 2m physical distance from one another. All staff must wear a mask/face covering.
- The tables and chairs in SET rooms will be wiped clean in between different pupils or small groups attending.

ICTs

A timetable will be drawn up for the use of common ICTs. Devices should be cleaned after every use and before they are returned to the charging trolley. A set of 18 ipads (1 device between every two pupils) has been purchased for deployment across all classes this year.

Office & visiting the school

The window to the office (just inside the main reception front door) is where visitors/parents can do the majority of their business.

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. Details to follow.

Children will not be sent to the office or to the reception area to deliver messages or if sick.

Staff members (apart from the Principals/DPs) will not enter the office area and will speak with office staff at the office internal window. The Principals and Deputy Principals will only enter the office where necessary.

Photocopying

Any staff member who uses the photocopier must clean it down after use with the wipes and/or anti-bacterial spray provided.

Visiting Teachers/Coaches

The possibility of facilitating extra-curricular activities will be explored in time. However, for now it is not recommended that children from different bubbles would participate in extracurricular activities at the same time, for example, during music lessons/GAA training/Athletics.

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’](#).

Shared equipment must be cleaned between uses.

Substitute Teachers and SNAs

A copy of the Covid-19 response plan will be provided to each substitute teacher/SNA. Substitutes will be required to complete a pre-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.

Parent & Teacher Meetings

Parent/Teacher Meetings usually held in November may take place via phone/Zoom or be postponed. We will assess the situation closer to the time.

We advise that the vast majority of communication between staff and parents will take place via email (email list will be provided) or telephone.

Staffroom & staff meetings

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 2m cannot be maintained in staff groups, face coverings must be worn.

Staff meetings will be held remotely or in small groups or in large spaces to facilitate physical distancing.

Staff members must bring their own cups, bottles, cutlery, etc. to school and avoid sharing utensils in the staffroom as far as possible. Arrangements for staffroom to be finalised.

Masks & Gloves

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

It is now recommended that teachers and other school staff wear face coverings, similar to those worn in shops or on public transport when a physical distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained. A visor will be provided for each staff member.

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.

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.
- When staff members have to move between classrooms to support children with learning needs.

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.

Hygiene and Cleaning

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

Note that, outside of the usual routine, hand sanitiser should be used when entering and exiting vehicles & when entering and exiting school buildings.

Paper towels and soap dispensers are available in all toilets and in the sinks at the back of the classrooms. Blue paper roll dispensers will also be provided.

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

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

In accordance with the DES guidelines, the school will be thoroughly cleaned at least once per day. We have increased the number of cleaners and their hours of work. 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 to help curb any potential spread of the disease. 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.)

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.

Illness and Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19

We love to see all of our boys 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 or pupils must not attend school if they display any symptoms.

A designated isolation area has been created just outside the GP room.

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, the following procedure will 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 2m away from the

symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2m from the symptomatic person at all times;

- The isolation area does not have to be a room but if it is not a room it should be 2m away from others in the room;
- If it is not possible to maintain a distance of 2m, a staff member caring for a pupil should wear a face covering or mask. Gloves should not be used as the virus does not pass through skin;
- Provide a mask for the person presenting with symptoms. 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 who will 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/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.

Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW) - Staff Only

A RTW form should be completed and returned to the school before returning to work. Staff (verbally or in writing) must confirm that the details in the pre-return to work form remain unchanged following subsequent periods of closure such as school holidays.

[Return to Work Form 2021](#) - staff only

How to Minimise the Risk of Introduction of COVID-19 into Schools:

Promote awareness of COVID-19 symptoms (see section below)

- Advise staff and pupils that have symptoms not to attend school, to phone their doctor and to follow HSE guidance on self-isolation;
- Advise staff and pupils to self-isolate or restrict their movements at home if they display any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 and contact their family doctor to arrange a test

- Advise staff and pupils, to follow the HSE advice if they are a close contact of a suspected/ confirmed case of Covid-19.
- If they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff and pupils are advised to consult and follow latest Government advices in relation to foreign travel.
- Advise staff and pupils that develop symptoms at school to bring this to the attention of the Principal promptly;
- Ensure that staff and pupils know the protocol for managing a suspected case of COVID-19 in school (**details at Section 8**);
- 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;
- Everyone entering the school building needs to perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser;
- Visitors to the school during the day should be by prior arrangement and should be received at a specific contact point;
- Physical distancing (of 2m) should be maintained between staff and visitors where possible.

Know the symptoms

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

- ✓ High temperature
- ✓ Cough
- ✓ Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- ✓ Loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste

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.

Common symptoms of coronavirus include:

- 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

If you have any common 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. 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

Employers and workers must keep themselves up to date on Public Health information as this can be updated on a regular basis. Public Health information on close contacts, casual contacts and testing is available from the HSE website.

COVID-19 Related Absence Management

COVID-19 related absences will be managed in line with agreed procedures with the Department of Education. [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Arrangements for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants employed in recognised Primary and Post Primary](#)

Teacher or SNA Absence and Substitution

If a teacher/SNA is unable to attend school, every effort will be made to secure a substitute teacher/SNA for the class/pupil. If a substitute teacher/SNA is not available, it is not appropriate for the class/pupil to be divided into groups and accommodated in other classes. In such circumstances, it may not be possible for the class/pupil to attend on that day. If that is the case, as much notice as possible will be given to parents.

Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

The Department recognises the need for school staff wellbeing and collective selfcare. 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'.

The EAS is a self-referral service where employees have access to a dedicated freephone confidential helpline 1800 411 057 available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year providing advice on a range of issues such as wellbeing, legal, financial, mediation, management support etc. The service is also available via SMS, WhatsApp, e-mail, live chat and call back request. All points of contact for the service are qualified, accredited and experienced mental health professionals.

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

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.