



Covid-19 School Response Plan

Ransboro National School

Updated for return of Special Classes 22nd February and return of Junior Classes 1st March.+ return of Senior Classes March 15th. Updated May 2021. Updated August 2021.

Introduction

This Covid-19 Response Plan is designed to support the staff and Board of Management in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of Covid-19 in Ransboro National School.

The Covid-19 Response Plan details the policies and practices necessary for a 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 (NPHET).

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 NPHET continues to evolve, this protocol and the measures management and staff need to address may also change.

The 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.

This document aims to provide details of:

1. COVID-19 School Policy
2. Planning and Preparing for Return to School
3. Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representative(s)
4. Safety Statement and Risk Assessment .
5. General advice to prevent the spread of the virus
6. Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)
7. Control Measures
8. Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19
9. Staff Duties
10. Covid related absence management
11. Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

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: The plan is a live working document and may be reviewed and amended to take into account new guidance from www.Gov.ie www.dbe.ie www.hse.ie www.hpsc.ie, www.hsa.ie • www.education.ie •

1. Ransboro National School COVID-19 Policy

This 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 and others.

COVID 19 Policy Statement

Ransboro National School 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 continue to monitor our COVID-19 response and amend this plan in consultation with our staff.

The Board of Management will:

- 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 in relation to summer provision
- 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 COVID19 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, Claire Donegan or Deputy Lead Worker Representative, Caroline Hynes. [September 2021- Tara Wetherald.](#)

Signed: Siobhan Clarke Date: 08.09.2020

Signed; Siobhán Buckley Date: 21.02.21. [1.09.21](#)



1. **Planning and Preparing for Return to School**

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

Details for the reopening of the school facility and the applicable controls are outlined in this document- detailed information forwarded to staff and parents are included at the end of this document. These information documents outline clearly procedures in place for staff and parents in the management of the Covid 19 pandemic in Ransboro National School.

Signage

Ransboro National School displays signage outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and supporting good hand and respiratory hygiene. Signs are displayed at all entrance gates and throughout the school building. Floor signs are also in place to remind pupils and staff of maintaining physical distancing at all times.

Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)

In order to return to the workplace, staff completed a Return to Work (RTW) form, which is available electronically or from the Principal.

The Principal provided details to staff 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.

Detailed emails were sent to staff and parents outlining all measures put in place in the school to ensure the safe return. (Email attached to this plan)

Emails were sent to all families and staff before the return to school in August 2021

Induction Training was provided for 2 new staff members August 2021.

3. **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.

In Ransboro National School, the Lead Worker Representative is Claire Donegan and the Deputy Lead Worker Representative is Caroline Hynes. 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(s) who will engage with the Principal/BOM.

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.

4. Safety Statement and Risk Assessment

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment. A risk assessment has been carried out to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 in our school setting.

Ransboro National School has reviewed our emergency procedures involving, fire safety, first aid, accidents and dangerous occurrences to consider any new risks that arise due to the school's COVID-19 Response Plan. Any changes to the schools existing emergency procedures will be documented and included in this plan.

A return to work form will be completed by every staff member on their return to work from February 22nd 2021.

A return to work form will be completed by every staff member on their return to work from August 30th 2021.

5. 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. They are:

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

The best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in a school is to minimise the risk of introduction of the disease into the school setting in the first place.

In Ransboro National School this is achieved through the following measures:

- The BOM has promoted awareness of COVtD-19 and its symptoms amongst staff, pupils, parents and visitors.
- All staff and parents of pupils have been advised that should they develop symptoms of COVED-19 or other acute infectious diseases, not to attend school, to phone their GP and follow the HSE guidance on self-isolation.

Staff and parents of pupils who have been identified by the HSE as contact of a person with COVID19 have been advised not to attend school and to follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement.



- Advice given to 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
- Advice given to staff and pupils not to return to or attend school in the event of the following:
 - if they are identified by the HSE as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19
 - if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus
 - If they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.
 - Advice given to 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;
- A clear plan is in place and staff and pupils know what to do if they develop symptoms at school.
- Everyone entering the school building are required to perform hand hygiene with hand sanitiser.
- Visitors to school during the day is by prior arrangement and are received at a specific contact point in the front porch.

Staff, pupils and visitors should 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/>

The Department of Education and Skills will ensure all updated advice is circulated to schools. Ransboro National School will arrange for this advice to be circulated to staff, pupils and visitors in a timely manner.

For further information, please follow this link.

<https://www.education.ie/en/covid-19/interim-recommendations-for-the-reopening-of-schools-and-educational-facilities.pdf>

Managing the risk of spread of COVID-19

- 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, please see the following link
<https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html>

Hand Hygiene and Hand Sanitisers

Hand hygiene can also be achieved by the use of a hand sanitiser (when hands are clean).

They are available at entry and exit points and inside and outside each classroom.

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.

Children will be given access to hand washing facilities after activities that are likely to soil hands- playing outside or using play equipment as sanitiser does not work on dirty hands.

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



Physical distancing

Physical distancing is recommended to reduce the spread of infection in the workplace. Classes from Junior infants to 2nd are grouped in pods within the classroom. Children from 3rd to 6th classes are seated 1m apart from each other throughout the room. **August 2021 all children have been placed in pods of 5/6 children** The staffroom is marked out to accommodate 8 people at any one time at a 2m distance from each other. .

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.

CO2 monitors will be placed into classrooms to monitor air quality levels in the classrooms. August 2021

Practice respiratory hygiene

Everyone is encouraged and reminded to follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your bent elbow when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately.

By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and Covid19.

Good hygiene practices and washing your hands properly and regularly can help stop the spread of the virus. It is, therefore, crucial that all staff adhere to this advice and adopt the following practices as strictly as possible. Do

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

Do Not

- Touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean
- Share objects that touch your mouth — for example, bottles, cups, cutlery, etc.

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:

The list of people in very high risk groups 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 or not staff fall into the very high-risk category, advice will be sought from the Occupational Health Service.

Schools reopening Feb 22nd, March 1st + March 15th, teachers who are pregnant are allowed to remain teaching remotely up until the Easter break March 26th. A substitute teacher can be employed. This will be reviewed by the Dept before April 12th. Teachers who are pregnant will remain working remotely for the remainder of the Summer term. All teachers unless identified as very high risk by medmark will be in school August 2021

6. 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 Ransboro National School.

These control measures are outlined in this document.

The 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, in particular, 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:

i. Return to Work Form

Staff are required to complete a 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.

Number of questions on the updated form has gone from 5 to 7

ii. 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 [1 Outline of the Covid-19 response plan

New members of staff completed Covid Induction Training prior to starting in Ransboro NS

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

iii. 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 are available at various locations within the school facility. Information posters are 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 facility and are also available inside and outside each classroom.

iv. 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 as appropriate in line with advice from the HPSC.

Where staff provide healthcare to children with medical needs in the school environment the school applies standard precautions as per usual practice.

Staff will wear a visor as an alternative to a facial covering and if coming within a closer distance of children, will wear a mask. [Staff will wear medical grade masks in the EN16483 category in school at all times August 2021](#) [staff will continue to wear medical grade masks in school.](#)

Wearing 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.

v.Cleaning

Arrangements for more regular and thorough cleaning of areas and surfaces within the school have been made.

Regular and thorough cleaning of communal areas and frequently touched surfaces shall be conducted, in particular, toilets, lifts, door handles and kitchens. Cleaning will be performed regularly and whenever facilities or surfaces are visibly dirty.

All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area. Under no circumstances should these cleaning materials be removed from the building.

Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day.

There will be regular collection of used waste disposal bags from offices and other areas within the school facility.

Shower facilities shall not be available for use by staff or pupils due to the increased risk associated with communal shower facilities and areas. This shall be reviewed in line with government guidance. Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.).

vi. Access to the school building /contact log

Access to the school facility is in line with agreed school procedures.

Arrangement for necessary visitors such as contractors and parents/guardians are 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, contractors



and visitors at the workplace. A detailed sign in/sign out log of those entering the school facilities is being maintained. The school should maintain a log of staff and students contacts.

vii. First Aid/emergency procedure

The standard First Aid/Emergency procedure shall continue to apply in Ransboro National School. 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.

7. Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19

[School staff are encouraged to download the HSE COVID-19 tracker app to assist Public Health for contract tracing purposes both in and out of the school setting.](#)

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

A designated isolation area has been identified within the school building. This area is the kitchenette on the new corridor. The possibility of having more than one person displaying signs of Covid-19 should be considered and a contingency plan for dealing with additional cases put in place. An overflow isolation area is in the library. The designated isolation area is behind a closed door and away from other staff and pupils.

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while at work in Ransboro National School, 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 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 and 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 confidentiality is essential at all times.

8. 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:

- i. 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.
- ii. Coordinate and work with their colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained.
- iii. Make themselves aware of the symptoms of Covid-19 and monitor their own wellbeing.
- iv. Self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any symptoms of Covid-19.
- v. Not return or attend school if they have symptoms of Covid-19 under any circumstances.
- vi. If they develop any symptoms of Covid-19 whilst within the school facility, they should adhere to the procedure outlined above.
- vii. Complete the RTW form before they return to work.
- viii. 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.
- ix. Must complete Covid-19 Induction Training and any other training required prior to their return to school.
- x. Must be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices.
- xi. Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.

Staff are not to return to or attend school in the event of the following:

→ if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus

→ If they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.

- Cooperate with any public health personnel and their school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice given in the event of a case or outbreak in their school

- Undergo any COVID-19 testing that may be required in their school as part of mass or serial testing as advised by Public Health

9. **Covid related absence management**

The management of a Covid-19 related absence will be managed in line with agreed procedures with DES.

10. **Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme**

Details of this scheme can be found by following this link https://www.googleadservices.com/pagead/aclk?sa=L&ai=DChcSEwjclt62ud7rAhUngFAGHScjDaYYABABGgJkZw&ae=2&ohost=www.google.com&cid=CAESQOD2xC7YW5U4S4eStiRgduepcUAWmSoS89DdUtXw_RFFmIg3ZPFSltUtVuqiJT1SVe2uHYLSVxHOTrgGMi7NBOW&sig=AOD64_3siliBeM7BKtrRIFqYbFFH6zL4FA&q&adurl&ved=2ahUKEwi9xta2ud7rAhVTuXEKHSr1Bw0Q0Qx6BAgOEAE