**Introduction**

**This plan has been developed by key personnel in Kilmessan Mixed NS in accordance with advice from the relevant authorities (DES, HSE, NPHET). The Plan was ratified by the school’s Board of Management on August 13th 2020.** **It is a *live document* that will be reviewed regularly & amended as required, to ensure compliance with best practice & the most up-to-date advice. The most recent *‘live’* version of the plan will be available to view on the school website (**[**www.kilmessanns.com**](http://www.kilmessanns.com)**) under the Covid 19 tab.**

**Underlying Principles**

* The school has a responsibility to ensure the safety, health and well-being of all members of our school community – children, parents and staff. This plan has been formulated to better ensure that the school can exercise that duty of care.
* Assuming it is in keeping with public health advice and guidelines issued by the Department of Education and Skills, it is preferable for all children to return to school for all five days of the school week and for a full school day. This plan has been formulated to achieve that aim.
* It is not possible to completely eliminate the risk of infection. However, with the co-operation of all members of our school community, it is possible to minimise the risk of the virus being introduced to school and the consequent risk of its spread.
* As well as co-operation, the flexibility and goodwill of all will be required to ensure the plan can be implemented.
* **In order to maintain a safe, secure workplace & learning environment, the only adults permitted to enter the school grounds are members of staff or persons engaged in essential work on behalf of the Board of Management. Parents/Guardians must remain outside the school gates while dropping off or collecting children.**

**Assumptions**

* All children return to school on August 27th and classes operate within a bubble system.
* The school is split into 2 groups (Junior & Senior) with each group having the same starting times, but different break times & lunch times.
* Junior Infants to Second Class will constitute Group 1. Third Class to Sixth Class will make up Group 2.
* The school day will include 1 x 10-minute morning break & 1 x 30-minute lunchtime break.
* Within each class from 3rd to 6th, the children will be further divided into pods, with a minimum distance of 1 metre being maintained between pods.
* Hand sanitiser will be available at all entry points and in all classrooms & support rooms.

**Timetables**

**Starting time for all children will remain 9:00am. Formal instruction begins at 9:10. In order to maintain social distancing, we request that parents & pupils stagger their arrival time between 8:50 & 9:10 daily. Pupils should enter the school grounds no earlier or later than these times & proceed directly to their classroom via the designated gate, route & entrance door for the particular class. Pupils will not congregate or line up in the school yard in the mornings. Teachers will be in their respective classrooms from 8:50am to receive their pupils.**

**Entry and Exit Points for Specific Classes.**

**These apply from morning reception time to evening dismissal time, including all break times. (Gate 1 is the main gate. Gate 2 is closer to the church)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Class** | **Teacher(s)** | **Rm.** | **Gate** | **School Entry & Exit Point** |
| **Jun. Inf** | **Ms. Everitt** | **15** | **1** | **Classroom Door (right of school)** |
| **Sen. Inf** | **Mrs. Maginn & Ms. Sloan** | **2** | **1** | **Main School Door (right)** |
| **Rang 1** | **Ms. Carroll** | **12** | **2** | **Classroom Door (left of school)** |
| **Rang 2** | **Ms. Carolan** | **11** | **2** | **Classroom Door (left of school)** |
| **Rang 3** | **Ms. Carrick** | **7** | **2** | **Main School Door (left)**  |
| **Rang 4A** | **Mrs. Bennett & Mrs. Grehan** | **4** | **1** | **Main School Door (right)** |
| **Rang 4B** | **Mrs. Bell & Ms. Sally** | **5** | **2** | **Main School Door (left)** |
| **Rang 5** | **Ms. Troy** | **13** | **2** | **Classroom Door (left of school)** |
| **Rang 6** | **Ms. Bradley** | **14** | **1** | **Classroom Door (right of school)** |

**Notes: Children must remain outside gates until 8:50am. *Children only* enter the school grounds in the mornings. At dismissal time the afternoon, parents/guardians may collect children outside the school gates. If they cannot stay in their cars, they are asked to stand a social distance apart outside the exit points.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Group 1****(Jun Inf – Rang 2)** | **Group 2****(3rd Class – 6th Class)** |
| **8:50 – 9:10: Pupils arrive & proceed directly to their classroom via designated gate, route & entrance****9.10 – Formal instruction begins****10.30 – Break time****10.40 – Class resumes****11.55 – Lunch time****12.25 – Class resumes****1.40 – Infant classes finish****2.40 – 1st & 2nd Classes finish** | **8:50 – 9:10: Pupils arrive & proceed directly to their classroom via designated gate, route & entrance****9.10 – Formal instruction begins****10.50 – Break time****11.00 – Class resumes****12.30 – Lunch time****1.00 – Class resumes****2.40 – Classes finish** |

***\*(Separate, special arrangements will be put in place for our Junior Infants and their parents/guardians at the beginning of the school year. The Junior Infants will finish at 12.00 noon for the first two weeks).***

**Arrival at school**

***Pupils should arrive between 8:50 & 9:10 each morning & proceed directly to their respective classrooms via the designated gate, route & entrance. Pupils will not congregate or line up in the school yard in the mornings.***

***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.***

* We ask for co-operation with these times as it will mean that the numbers congregating on school grounds at any one time will be minimised.
* Class teachers will be in their classrooms from 8:50 to receive their pupils.
* Other staff members (including Special Education Teachers, SNAs and the Principal) will be available outside and inside the building to receive the children and to direct them to their classrooms.
* If a child appears unwell on entering the classroom, the principal will contact the parent and ask the parent to take the child home immediately. This must be done in the interests of safety & protection of other pupils & staff.
* No adults, other than staff members, should enter the school grounds in the mornings.
* Messages for teachers can be sent to the school email, class email, See Saw or by phoning the school office (046)9025532.

**End of School Day**

* Adults who are collecting their children from school at the end of the day, should wait outside the school gates while maintaining social distancing at all times.
* **This system will apply rain, hail or shine, so please make sure that your child comes to school prepared for the weather!**
* When the school day for a particular class is over, the following arrangements will apply:
	+ Junior and Senior Infants: the class teacher will bring the children to the collection point (school gates) and will release the children into the care of the adult who is there to collect them. *All Junior Infants will be brought to the collection point at 12.00 each day for the first two weeks*. Adults to congregate maintaining social distancing.
	+ 1st – 6th Class: the class teacher will bring the children to the school gates and they will proceed on their own from there. Adults who are not waiting in cars must congregate at the exit point, maintaining social distancing.

**Collection of Children during the School Day**

If an adult has to collect a child during the course of the school day, the following arrangements will apply

* When the adult arrives at the school, they should either phone the office or use the intercom at the front door of the school to alert the office that they have arrived
* The child will be brought from their class to the adult, at the front door, by a member of staff
* The adult who is collecting will be asked to sign the child out
* No adult should enter the school building, unless invited to do so

**Other Responsibilities for Parents:**

* **Parents must ensure that every child has his/her own hand sanitiser, wipes and packet of tissues. These are considered essential items which should be labelled & kept in the child’s school bag. These items must be replaced when empty.**
* **Parents must ensure that all of the child’s equipment/books/copies etc. are clearly labelled with the child’s name as equipment cannot be shared.**
* **Parents must ensure that their child knows and uses the protocols around coughing/sneezing/use of tissues/hand sanitisers prior to returning to school.**
* **Parents must ensure that all books/writing equipment/lunch boxes/water bottles are sanitised using alcohol wipes on completion of homework before being placed in the child’s school bag.**
* **Water bottles are to be filled before coming to school every morning.**
* Where practicable, pencils to be pared at home and copies ruled.
* Children are to go to the bathroom **before** they leave home for school daily.
* Children are to wash their hands **before** leaving for school.

**Lunches**

Parents/guardians are asked to make sure that children bring their own 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.

Please see the school’s Healthy Eating Policy for more information/suggestions about school lunches. This policy is posted on the school website www.kilmessanns.com.

**School Uniform:**

* Children’s uniforms (including tracksuits) must be clean and washed regularly, as a child may have coughed or sneezed into their sleeve as per coughing protocols.
* As per policy, the full school uniform should be worn every day, except for PE day, when the school track suit should be worn. The class teacher will inform pupils & parents about *other* days when the track suit should be worn.
* ***It is more important than ever that all clothing be clearly labelled, as a “Lost and Found” box cannot be facilitated.* Unidentified/unclaimed lost property will be disposed of promptly.**
* **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 from school. They should not be worn during after-school activities.**
* ***It may be advisable that pupils have a ‘spare’ uniform. As our uniform is not crested, generic uniforms are available widely at a very reasonable cost.***

**Children who should not attend school**

**In accordance with DES & HSE guidelines, children in the following categories, should not attend school –**

* **Children who have been diagnosed with Covid-19**
* **Children who have been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with Covid-19**
* **Children who have a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending**
* **Children who have been in contact with a person who has a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending**
* **Children with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school**
* **Children who have returned home after travelling abroad and must self-isolate for a period of 14 days**
* **Children who are generally unwell or presenting with a high temperature**
* **If parents are in any doubt about whether their child should attend school, please keep the child at home & seek medical advice.**

**Children in High Risk Groups:** Parents should seek advice from their GP/Specialist if they think their child is in a high-risk group. They must make an informed decision if it is safe for their child to return to school. They should inform the principal of the advice given. If there are any parents out there who have concerns about their child’s health, please contact the Principal by email or telephone.

The Minister for Health recently announced that the flu vaccine will be available free to all children aged between 2 and 12 in the coming weeks. The vaccine will be given as drops on the tongue. We are awaiting further information on this and will let you know as soon as we get an update. It is *likely* that the vaccine will be given in the schools so as to avoid thousands of families descending on GPs.

**Supporting the Learning of Children who cannot attend school**

If a child is not able to attend school for an extended period of time, the class teacher (and/or the Special Education Teacher [SET], where relevant) will provide suggested activities to support the child’s learning at home to the parents/guardians.

**Impact of a Suspected or Confirmed Case of Covid-19 in a Class**

***The following key points were updated by the Dept. of Health, DES & HSE August 27th***.

* The response to confirmed cases or outbreaks of Covid-19 in the community or in a school is the responsibility of and will be led and managed by **Public Health HSE**. All decisions as to appropriate actions following a confirmed case or outbreak will be made by their teams in the context of a full Public Health Risk Assessment procedure according to the principles set out in the document attached. Any actions to be taken by the school will be communicated directly by Public Health HSE. School management will be informed as and when such actions such as exclusion of children or staff; partial or full closure, are deemed necessary on public health grounds. If the school is not so informed, it has **not been deemed necessary** by Public Health.
* It is inevitable that with confirmed cases of Covid-19 circulating within the community, there will be suspect or confirmed cases amongst pupils and staff attending, or working within, educational facilities.
* However, children will also continue to display symptoms of many other circulating respiratory viruses. It is known that young children often have a persistent cold. A child with a blocked or runny nose, but no fever can attend school but if they require paracetamol or ibuprofen, they must stay at home for 48 hours and parents or guardians should contact the GP to assess whether a test is required.
* If a child displays symptoms which **may** be consistent with Covid-19, the school should contact their parent or guardian and ask them to collect their child as soon as possible. The child should be cared for appropriately by a staff member whilst they are waiting to go home. The isolation space should be cleaned and contact surfaces disinfected when vacated. The staff member who has cared for the child with symptoms during this time does not need to go home unless subsequently advised to by Public Health HSE.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

* At this stage, **no further action** by the school is required.
* In particular, schools are asked to note that they should **not** inform other parents or staff members that a pupil or staff member has gone home due to their symptoms. Other pupils or staff do **not** need to be removed from class, including siblings or other household members.
* When the GP of the child or staff member has assessed the symptoms to be consistent with Covid-19 infection, e.g. fever OR a new cough, shortness of breath, deterioration of existing respiratory condition OR symptoms of aguesia or dysgeusia (essentially loss of or changes to the sense of taste) and the person is referred for a test, at this point the person becomes a suspected Covid 19 case and household members including siblings should be withdrawn from school by their parent or guardian.
* Where no evidence of Covid-19 is detected by the test, the child or staff member should remain at home only until he or she is clinically well enough to return to school (unless specifically requested by HSE to do otherwise). In particular, all diarrhoea symptoms need to have been resolved for 48 hours prior to return to school. Household members can return to school immediately following the receipt by the parent or guardian or staff member of a “not detected” result.
* When a case has been confirmed, the Medical Officer of Health and teams will liaise directly with the school and inform them of the confirmed case as necessary and will undertake a Public Health Risk Assessment to inform any further actions and recommendations.
* Core to this assessment will be the likelihood of onward transmission from the confirmed case and will be informed by an urgent discussion with the school to establish any appropriate isolation for identified staff or pupils. Every school setting is unique and therefore the risks will be unique too, for example they will vary according to whether they are e.g. Special educational needs settings, primary or secondary or boarding schools and other factors specific to each school. This may include the effectiveness of the implementation of recommended HPSC risk mitigation measures and a range of other considerations.
* The definition of close contacts within a school will be variable and determined by a risk assessment that will take account of individual factors within each school or class. **It will not be automatically assumed that a whole class will be deemed as close contacts.**  Close contacts will be directly notified by the HSE and advised to restrict their movements and present for testing on day zero and day seven. Close contacts will restrict their movements for 14 days even in the event that Covid 19 is not detected in both of these tests.
* **There is no blanket policy to test entire classes or years.** The testing strategy will be aligned to the Public Health Risk Assessment which may recommend widespread swabbing within a class or school under HSE mass testing procedures.
* In the event of an outbreak, Public Health will determine between a range of possible interventions, from exclusion and testing of a small group or pod of pupils up to and including closure of an affected facility.

**Use of Face masks: It is currently not recommended in Ireland for children under 13 to wear face masks as a mitigation strategy against the transmission of the coronavirus. If this advice changes, we will inform parents/guardians accordingly.**

**If a parent wishes their child to wear a mask or visor, this will be permitted.**

**Personal Equipment**

* It is requested that all children from 1st to 6th Class bring their own pens, pencils, colours, rubbers, etc., to school in their own pencil case to avoid the sharing of equipment.
* It is further requested that *all items* are clearly labelled with the child’s name for ease of identification.
* For children in Junior and Senior Infants, the school will provide a pouch or container which will hold each child’s pencils, crayons, etc., and which will be labelled with their name. These will not be shared.

**Shared Equipment**

By necessity, some classroom equipment needs to be shared including tablets, laptops and the equipment used for structured activities and play in Infant classrooms. Cleaning of such shared equipment with wipes or other cleaning products will take place at regular intervals to minimise the risk of the spread of infection.

**Children’s learning spaces**

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.

**Junior Infants to Second Class**

It is recognised that younger children are unlikely to maintain physical distancing indoors so there is currently 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.

* Only resources which can be easily cleaned will be used. Toys and materials which are difficult to clean (e.g. dress up clothes or soft toys) will not be used during this temporary Covid-19 emergency.
* Pupils will hand sanitise before and after using any materials.
* Pupils will not be allowed to share materials/resources.
* Break times will be staggered, see separate timetable.
* Additional time will be spent by the hygiene staff in cleaning the school.

**Doors and Windows**

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

To ensure that classrooms are well ventilated, windows will be kept open as often 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. **Tin whistles will not be used for the time being.**

**Office**

We have an online payment system (Databiz), which minimises 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 online payments through the school office.

Children will not be sent to the Secretary’s Office or to other rooms to deliver messages.

As far as possible, staff members will not enter the Office and will speak with the Secretary at the Foyer/ Reception area.

**Photocopying**

Any staff member who uses the photocopier should clean it down after use with the wipes provided. Staff are requested to use the same photocopier as often as possible.

**Yard**

Each class bubble will have access to the yard (& field when dry) during their allotted break times.

The yard & field has been divided into separate sections for each class bubble.

Yards will be supervised by class teachers, SETs and SNAs working within those bubbles.

**Special Education Support**

In keeping with our Special Education policy, support 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 within the confines of a bubble.

* In-class Support: Where a support teacher is working alongside a class teacher in a classroom, both teachers must be mindful of maintaining social distance from one another.
* Withdrawal Support: Where children receive support in one of the SET rooms, social distancing of 1 metre will be maintained between each child in the group.
* The tables and chairs in SET rooms will be wiped clean in between different groups attending

**PPE**

Staff *may* wear face coverings & other PPE, in accordance with current HSE/NPHET/DES advice. Staff who are attending to particular care needs, dealing with suspected COVID-19 cases or who are administering first aid *will* wear appropriate PPE including gloves, face masks and face shields.

**Teacher Absence and Substitution**

**In the event that a teacher is unable to attend school, every effort will be made to secure a substitute teacher for the class. If a substitute teacher is not available, SET staff *may* be re-deployed to teach the class. *It is not appropriate for any class to be divided into groups and accommodated in other classes*. Therefore, if all other options have been exhausted, it *may* not be possible for the class to attend school on that day. In such a scenario, as much notice as possible will be given to parents.**

**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 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.

**PE**

**Weather permitting, PE will take place outdoors. To the greatest extent possible, PE will take place without the use of shared equipment, for the time being.**

**Extra-curricular Activities**

The possibility of facilitating extra-curricular activities will be explored. However, it would not be recommended that children from different bubbles would participate in extra-curricular activities at the same time. Further updates will be provided in September.

**Parent/ Teacher Meetings**

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

**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 staff room and arriving to work. Face coverings should be worn.

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

Staff members should bring their own cups, bottles, cutlery, etc. to school and avoid sharing utensils in the staffroom as far as possible.

**Hygiene and Cleaning**

Multiple hand sanitiser dispensers have been installed throughout the school e.g. at each entrance, in each classroom, support room etc.

All pupil bathrooms are equipped with soap dispensers, disposable paper towels & handwashing instructions.

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

In accordance with the DES guidelines, as well as the usual cleaning, particular attention will be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, light switches, 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 classroom. Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day.

**Teaching and Learning**

As a staff, we are very aware that the children have been away from school since March 12th. We appreciate the time and effort that went into Distance Learning, and we recognise the challenges that Distance Learning presented for all families.

Each child will be a different place in relation to his/her learning, and we wish to assure you that staff will take that into consideration when planning for Teaching and Learning during the 2020/2021 school year.

The Department of Education and Skills has published Curriculum guidelines for us, and we ask you to trust our experience and professional expertise as we work with all the children during the return to school.

**Distance Learning**

We are aware that we *may* need to revert to Distance Learning in the event of a further shutdown.

All pupils (in all classes) are registered on the SeeSaw Distance Learning App. Pupils will receive tuition on the use of SeeSaw & will be expected to submit work regularly via this platform. Teachers may also set homework to be submitted via the relevant class email address, Class Dojo etc.

**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 if & when the need arises.

# Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19

Pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19. If a pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while in the building, the following are the procedures that will be implemented:

* Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately
* The child will be accompanied to the designated isolation area via the isolation route by a member of staff. The staff member will remain at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic child and will also make sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic child at all times.
* The ‘GP Strip’ will be the designated isolation area. Seating will be two metres apart. Supervision will be provided by a member of the school staff, at a safe distance.
* A mask will be provided for the child presenting with symptoms, if one is available. S/he should wear the mask if in a common area with other people, in the isolation area & while exiting the premises
* An assessment will be made as to whether the child who is displaying symptoms can immediately be brought home by parents, who will call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home
* The school will facilitate the child presenting with symptoms to remain in isolation, if they cannot immediately go home, and will assist them by calling their GP.
* The child presenting with symptoms should be advised to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and to put the tissue in the waste bin provided
* If the child is well enough to go home, the school will arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible, and advise them to inform their GP 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, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick child is a Covid-19 suspect.
* Arrangements will be made 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 shall be followed.

**This Plan is a *live document* that will be reviewed regularly & amended as required to ensure compliance with best practice & the most up-to-date advice from the relevant authorities. The most recent *‘live’* version of the plan will be available to view on the school website (**[**www.kilmessanns.com**](http://www.kilmessanns.com)**) under the Covid 19 tab.**

Useful links:

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/if-your-child-has-symptoms.html>

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/472f64-covid-19-coronavirus-guidance-and-advice/>

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a0bff-reopening-our-primary-and-special-schools/>