



Bunscoil Bhríde, Rathangan, Co. Kildare

Plan for the safe re-opening of Bunscoil Bhríde in September 2021 **Updated October 2021 and December 2021**

THE FOLLOWING IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE BASED ON CURRENT HEALTH AND SAFETY ADVICE RELATING TO COVID-19

Underlying Principles

- The school has a responsibility to make every effort 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.
- It is not possible to 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. We are all in this together!

Overview

We will operate a class bubble system, with each class acting as a separate ‘bubble’ and we will ensure that there is as little contact as possible between class bubbles. The children in the Bluebells Class will be part of the class bubbles of their respective mainstream classes. Within the bubbles, children will be organised into ‘pods’. The pods within those class bubbles is an additional measure, to limit the extent of close contact within the class bubble. A pod is a group of children who will sit together and who will stay in their pod while within the school building. There will be four/five/six children in each of our pods. Pods will change after each school closure e.g. Halloween / Christmas etc. giving the children the chance to sit with different children.

We will endeavour to limit interaction within classrooms, to limit contact between class groups and to limit the sharing of common facilities.

While we will all be delighted to see each other, handshaking and hugging will not be allowed.

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Principal: Maria Rogerson
Deputy Principal: Rós O’Sullivan



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Staggered start and finish times

We will operate staggered start and finish times, by dividing the school into two cohorts; Cohort 1 and Cohort 2. Please take note of which Cohort your child is in.

| Cohort 1 | | Cohort 2 | |
|----------|---|----------|--|
| Room | Class | Room | Class |
| 9 | 2 nd Class – Ms. Geraghty | 1 | Junior Infants – Ms. Ryan |
| 10 | 2 nd Class – Ms. Frawley | 2 | Senior Infants – Ms. De Faoite |
| 11 | 3 rd Class – Ms. Gorman | 5 | Senior Infants – Ms. Costello |
| 8 | 5 th Class – Ms. Millane | 6 | 1 st Class – Ms. McEvoy |
| 12 | 5 th & 6 th Class – Ms. Ruttledge | 3 | 3 rd & 4 th Class – Ms. Coughlan |
| 7 | 6 th Class – Mr. O’Sullivan | 4 | 4 th Class – Ms. Fitzpatrick |
| | | 13 | Bluebells Class – Ms. Rowley |

Arrival Times

| • Arrival window | Category of Parents |
|------------------|---|
| 8.45am – 8.55am | Parents with one child only who is in Cohort 1 |
| 8.50am – 8.55am | Parents / childminders dropping off two or more children who belong to both Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 |
| 8.50am – 9.00am | Parents with one child only who is in Cohort 2 |

No child in Cohort 2 should be dropped off before 8.50am – there will be no supervision available in their classrooms before 8.50am

As children from both cohorts travel on the buses, they will arrive as normal and proceed to their classrooms through their own designated route.

Children will come straight through their designated gate and designated door (see Routes below). They will hand-sanitise upon entry to the school (5 hand-sanitise dispensers located inside each of the entry doors spaced 1m apart). Children go directly to their classrooms where they will be met by their teacher.

There will be no use of the yard in the morning. We are asking parents to drop and go at their designated time (as detailed above). **Please do not arrive before this time and please do not congregate or allow your child(ren) to congregate outside the gate.** If your child(ren) is / are walking / cycling to school they should not arrive before their designated time. Social distancing should be maintained outside the school gate at all times and we ask that masks be worn by parents. We are all in this together and we are appealing for your co-operation to ensure the safety of all of our school community.

Home / Collection Time

There will be special arrangements in place for the Junior Infants for the first two weeks. They will go home at 12pm from 31st August to 13th September inclusive. From 14th September the times below will apply to Junior Infants.

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| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------|
| All Junior & Senior Infant pupils | 1.30pm |
| Cohort 1 | 2.25pm |
| Cohort 2 | 2.30pm |

Class teachers will bring their classes to their designated gate at the above times.

Please maintain social distancing and wear a mask while waiting for your daughter(s) at the school gate. Where possible, we would encourage that children walk/cycle to school.

Staggered Breaks

We will operate staggered breaks to allow for segregation of the class bubbles on the yards.

| Cohort 2 | | Cohort 1 | |
|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Small break | 10.40am – 10.50am | Small Break | 11.00am – 11.10am |
| Big Break | 12.15pm – 12.45pm | Big Break | 12.50pm – 1.20pm |

There will be six classes out on the two yards at each of the breaks, with separate sections marked out for each class bubble. Four classes will use the large yard to the rear of the school and two classes will use the Newtown Yard. Floor Signs have been sprayed onto the tarmac in the areas where children line up after breaks to facilitate social distancing.

The DES Covid-19 guidelines state that the risk of transmission from contact with outside surfaces or play areas is low.

All classes will get an extra 10 minutes (outside of break times) active free play under the supervision of their teacher using the whole yard each day. The DES guidelines highlight the importance of physical exercise and we are eager to facilitate this. This will also give the children from Third to Sixth Class, who are wearing masks inside the school building, to get a break from wearing their masks.

Two entry exit points to the school

To facilitate social distancing we have established two distinct entry / exit points to the school - Route A and Route B. Route A and Route B will be separated by a barrier. The following classes will use the route as highlighted below:

| Route A | | Route B | |
|----------------|-------------------------------|----------------|--|
| Room | Class | Room | Class |
| 1 | Junior Infants – Ms. Ryan | 2 | Senior Infants – Ms. De Faoite |
| 5 | Senior Infants - Ms. Costello | 3 | 3 rd & 4 th Class – Ms. Coughlan |

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| | | | |
|----|---|----|---|
| 6 | 1 st Class – Ms. McEvoy | 4 | 4 th Class – Ms. Fitzpatrick |
| 7 | 6 th Class – Mr. O’Sullivan | 8 | 5 th Class – Ms. Millane |
| 11 | 3 rd Class – Ms. Gorman | 9 | 2 nd Class – Ms. Geraghty |
| 12 | 5 th & 6 th Class – Ms. Ruttledge | 10 | 2 nd Class – Ms. Frawley |
| 13 | Bluebells Class – Ms. Rowley | | |

Operation of Route A and Route B ensure that children will never meet on the corridor / stairs during entry / exit of the school.

Staff / Staff-Room

All staff members must return the completed the Covid-19 Return to Work Form at least three days prior to returning to the school. All staff members must have completed Induction Training in Covid-19, provided by the DES prior to returning to the school.

All staff members should maintain a physical distance of 2 metres when they are not engaged in teaching e.g. when arriving to school and using the staffroom.

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

There will be strict social distancing of 2 metres in place in the staffroom. To facilitate this, the staffroom accommodation has been limited to eight staff members at any one time, with the furniture replaced to allow for social distancing. All tables and chairs will be sanitised after each member of staff finishes his / her break. The fabric chairs have been replaced by plastic chairs to facilitate this.

Cleaning

We will have access to six extra cleaning hours per day. We will have three cleaners on site every evening, each with responsibility for a designated area of the building. We will also have a cleaner on site for one hour in the afternoons to clean and sanitise the staffroom and sanitise frequently-touched surfaces (banisters on stairs / door handles). All cleaners will be provided with a cleaning schedule as per the DES guidelines and all cleaning procedures as outlined will be adhered to. Cleaning staff will be provided with training prior to commencing in September.

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. All cleaning materials stored in classrooms will be stored out of the reach of children.

The school have purchased a Fogging Device which will be used to sanitise all PE equipment and shared teaching resources on a daily basis.

Waste will be collected regularly from the offices, classrooms and other areas within the school.

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Hand Hygiene

We have installed 79 hand-sanitiser dispensers throughout the school. There will be three hand-sanitising stations in every classroom and two in each of the Special Education Rooms. All other rooms and areas of the corridors will have dispensers. There will be five dispensers at each of the entry points to the school, positioned 1 metre apart.

All sinks in the school have hot water and access to foam soap and hand towel dispensers have been installed beside every sink in the school, including all sinks in toilets and classrooms.

A further hand-sanitiser pump will be positioned on each teacher's desk for use before and after copy-correcting.

As children will have so much access to hand-sanitiser inside the classroom and outside, there is no requirement for your daughter to bring hand-sanitiser to school.

We ask you to ensure you are practising good hand hygiene at home with your daughter and that she is aware of the correct hand-washing techniques and practises them frequently at home. Hand-washing / sanitising will happen very regularly throughout the school day, as recommended in the DES guidelines.

Classroom Layouts

Maintaining physical distancing in the school environment is recommended as one of the key control measures to minimize the risk of the introduction and spread of COVID-19. The desks in all classrooms will be organised into pods, seating four/five/six children. There will be a minimum of 1 metre distance between each pod. Sharing educational material between Pods will be avoided where possible.

Team Teaching / Special Education Teachers (SETs) / Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)

In line with our Special Education Policy, learning support will be provided by a blended approach of in-class support and withdrawal. The provision of support will be organised to ensure that movement between bubbles is as limited as possible for SETs. Each of our twelve class bubbles will be paired with one of our four SETs, who will only interact with children in these specific bubbles.

Where a support teacher / SNA is working alongside the class teacher in a classroom, both members of staff must be mindful of maintaining social distance from one another.

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 the SET rooms will be wiped down with disinfectant spray in between different pupils

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or small groups attending.

Uniforms / P.E.

All classes from Junior Infants to 1st Class will wear the school tracksuit only this year. Classes from 2nd to 6th will have PE on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Please see table below for correct uniform to be worn on each day for pupils from 2nd to 6th classes.

| Day | Uniform |
|------------------|------------------|
| Monday | School Uniform |
| Tuesday | School Tracksuit |
| Wednesday | School Uniform |
| Thursday | School Tracksuit |
| Friday | School Uniform |

There is no guidance or advice to say that school uniforms or tracksuits should be washed every day and this is not practical for most families. However, for the families who wish to wash every day, the uniform arrangements outlined above allow for this.

School uniform / tracksuit should only be worn by children while at school. We are appealing to all parents to ensure that school uniforms / tracksuits are taken off straight after the child arrives home after school for the day. They should not be worn in after-school facilities, shops, during after-school activities etc.

P.E. will be taught outside as much as possible. All PE equipment will be sanitised after use by a class before being returned to the PE equipment room.

IT equipment

Timetables will be drawn up for use of the Chromebooks and iPads. All surfaces of the Chromebooks and iPads will be wiped down with disinfectant wipes after use, before being return to the charging trolley.

Teaching Resources / Toys

All shared toys / teaching resources will be sterilised after use by each pod, before being put away. The fogging device can be used for this purpose. Alternatively, all teachers have a supply of Milton in their rooms. Soft / fabric toys have been removed from all rooms.

Personal Equipment

Children will use their own books, pens, pencils etc. and should not share with other pupils. All children should

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have one pencil-case ONLY, containing limited, basic, necessary stationery. We would ask that no paraphernalia e.g. 'fluffy bits' attached to bags / pencil-cases / pencils etc. be brought to school. Every item within the schoolbag and the pencil-case should be clearly labelled with the child's name. Pencil-cases will be retained in school. The only items within the school-bag to go between home and school will be the lunch-box and drinks bottle.

Book rental books will be labelled with your child's name in advance of being distributed. Books for each pod will be stored together and kept separate from the books of other pods.

Lunches and Drinks

All lunch-boxes and drinks should be clearly labelled with your child's name. We are asking parents to make sure that their children bring their lunches and drinks 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 any other children. Children will eat their lunches at their desks, as per our usual practice.

Coats

We will refrain from our practice of hanging all coats together in classrooms. Children will be asked to place their coat into their school-bag, while in the classroom. Coats that are wet will be hung, with an effort made to ensure that they are not in contact with coats of children who are in a different pod.

Music

Usually the Board of Management fund tin whistle lessons with Annette Randles for classes for the first term annually. The DES guidelines refer to a greater risk posed by the playing of wind instruments. For that reason, we will not be using the tin whistle at school this year. Tin whistles should be kept at home and we would ask parents to encourage the children to practise their playing at home.

Corridors and Stairs

The DES guidelines state that briefly passing someone in a hall is very unlikely to contribute significantly to the spread of infection if people do not have physical contact and avoid informal group discussions. We are fortunate in that we have wide corridors (nearly 2 metres). We will walk in single file on the right-hand side of the corridors and stairs. Vinyl directional arrows will be attached to the corridors and stairs to highlight this rule.

Door and Windows

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Where practical, all internal doors will be left open to minimise hand contact with common surfaces. To ensure classrooms are well-ventilated, windows will be kept open as often as possible.

Office

We have a contactless payment system in place through our pupil administration system, Aladdin. This is entirely secure. We are appealing to parents to protect our staff by using Aladdin online e-payments, rather than sending cash into school. The e-payment link has been sent to all parents and we ask that payment is made in advance of 1st September. Please email the school if you are experiencing financial difficulties and I will get in contact with you in confidence.

As far as possible, staff members should not enter the Office area and should only speak with the secretary / Principal at the Reception area.

Photocopying

Any staff member who uses the photocopier should hand-sanitise before and after use. Hand-sanitiser dispensers are located next to each of the photocopiers.

After-school activities

While the importance of after-school activities for children is recognised and we are eager to resume the programme of after-school activities in our school, with class bubbles in operation and with our being instructed by the Department of Education and Skills to keep class bubbles separate, running after-school activities will not be possible until the guidance from the Department is updated.

We are concerned that it would be very difficult for after-school providers to maintain our class bubbles, and the fact that most of them may be travelling between a number of schools or coming from other settings, potentially exposes our school to extra risk of infection.

Library

Our Library will remain be out of use this year, as its use by all of the different class bubbles, would pose too much of a risk and undermine the integrity of our bubbles. We recognise the importance of reading and want to ensure that the children always have a library book to read. To this end, all teachers will be provided with a large box, into which he / she will place 50 books selected specifically for his/her class, to be stored in each classroom. Children will choose books to take home from this selection. When a book is returned to school, it will be placed out of use for a period of 72 hours (recommended in the DES guidelines), before being safely returned to the library box. Children should all bring a large ziplock bag, marked with their name to school, in which they will carry their library book into and out of school (to protect the book in the event of bag spillages!).

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Substitute Teachers and SNAs

A copy of this Covid Plan will be provided to all substitute teachers and SNAs working in the school. Substitutes will be required to complete a Return to Work Form before they enter a classroom and will be asked to confirm that they have engaged in the online Induction training provided by the DES.

Visitors to the School

Visits to the school will be kept to a minimum, must be absolutely necessary, and be by prior arrangement / appointment. Visitors must wear a face covering, hand-sanitise on entry to the school and maintain social distancing at all times.

Parent / Teacher Meetings

Parent / Teacher Meetings may take place via phone consultation in the first instance. If deemed necessary, face-to-face meetings will be held with parents in either the hall or the library where social distancing is possible,

Collection of Children during the School Day

Children should only be collected early if absolutely necessary.

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 by a member of staff
- The child's early departure will be recorded on Aladdin by the Secretary
- No adult should enter the school building, unless invited to do so

A Perspex screen has been installed at the Secretary's hatch and on the teacher's desk in Room 12 to provide protection.

Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Appropriate PPE will be available for dealing with suspected Covid-19 cases, intimate care needs and first aid. Where staff provide healthcare to children with medical needs / first aid to children they will apply standard precautions as per usual.

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Staff will wear face coverings. All staff have been provided with a supply of surgical grade (EN14683) face-masks. Staff in the Bluebells class have been provided with KN95 masks. Visors have also been made available to all staff.

Children from Third to Sixth Class will wear masks inside the school building from December 1st. Each of the teachers will have a box of children's masks in their classroom, should a child forget her mask or need a replacement. Mask breaks (whereby the class go outside and take their masks off) will be built into the school day.

Homework

All homework will be recorded on Seesaw / Google Classroom.

Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19

Pupils / staff members should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19 <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/symptoms.html>. If a pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while in the building, the following are the procedures will be implemented:

- Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately
- The child will be accompanied to the designated isolation area (the Servery) 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
- A mask will be provided for the child presenting with symptoms, if one is available. She should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or 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 and 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 her mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when she coughs or sneezes and to put the tissue in the waste bag 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.

All current guidelines provided by the HSE in relation to close contacts at school will be followed. The instructions of the HSE should be followed.

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Staff members who are symptomatic should immediately inform the Principal/Deputy Principal and go to the isolation area. If the staff member is well enough to go home, arrangements will be made for them to be transported home either alone or by a family member (as appropriate), as soon as possible.

Children who should not attend school

If your child is in one of the following categories, they 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 are generally unwell

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, where relevant) will provide work to support the child's learning at home and this will be shared with parents/guardians. All teachers will share a broad overview of their fortnightly learning objectives for each curricular area to parents via the Aladdin app.

We use the Aladdin Connect app to communicate with parents. Please ensure that you have downloaded the Aladdin Connect app (new parents of our school will be given details of this app and how to download it during the first week in September). Please check into the app and ensure that you have provided at least two emergency contact numbers for us to phone in the event of us not being able to get in contact with you. Please note these two contact numbers should be numbers of people other than you, the parents. You can add / edit these numbers within the app. You can also update your contact information (phone number / email address) within the app. We recommend that both parents download the app. Please contact us if you are having difficulty with this so that we can assist you.

In the event that the school or parts of the school have to close due to HSE advice, we will facilitate Home Learning through use of the Aladdin app, and Google Classroom for the senior classes and Seesaw for the junior classes.

Teacher or SNA Absence and Substitution

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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

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.

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