



Brannoxtown Community National School (BCNS)

Covid-19 Response Plan: Overview for Parents

Staying Well & Protecting Families

Updated: 18 September 2020

1. Introduction

Brannoxtown Community National School (CNS) is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all staff and a safe learning environment for all children. Our school's Response Plan identifies key measures to contain the spread of COVID-19. At Brannoxtown CNS, we understand that everyone has a role to play in implementing our school's COVID-19 Response Plan—members of the Board of Management, school staff, parents, children and community members.

The measures summarised in this overview document represent our combined effort to help contain the spread of the virus. The school's entire Covid-19 Response Plan includes the following items, available at: www.brannoxtowncns.ie/school-policies/

- Covid-19 BCNS Staff Return to Work Form
- Covid-19 BCNS Policy Statement
- Covid-19 BCNS Cleaning Framework
- Covid-19 BCNS Risk Assessment
- Covid-19 BCNS Physical Distancing
- Covid-19 BCNS Response Plan: Overview
- Covid-19 BCNS Management Checklist

The above documents are monitored and amended as needed to include **up-to-date information** for children, staff and parents on public health advice from the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the government at: www.gov.ie/backtoschool. Specific HSE advice for parents is also published on our site, e.g., 'Is a sneeze/runny nose ok?'

2. Helping Your Child at Home

Three measures are key to reducing risk and increasing safety for your child at school: practising social distancing, good respiratory etiquette and regular hand-hygiene practises.

Social Distancing

- Helping your child to understand the need for social distancing is a first step in preparing for a safe return to school.
- Parents need to know and share social distancing expectations in school with children at home:
 - Younger children (up to 2nd Class) are not expected to maintain physical distancing in school.
 - Children from 3rd to 6th Class are to maintain a distance of 1 metre, shoulder to shoulder, indoors.

- Our large classrooms and small numbers have enabled us to plan classroom layouts which maximise the available space while ensuring classrooms are still inviting spaces for all children.
- Physical distancing of 2 metres is recommended for all adults (parents and staff) on our school grounds.
- Stencils to show 2 metres distance are visible at gates and doors to the school.

Respiratory Etiquette / Cover your cough and sneeze

- The HSE's guidelines for what to do when coughing or sneezing are very important for children to understand and practise—at home and in school.
- The following are the steps we take at our school, in line with the HSE advice to everyone, of all ages, to help prevent the spread of colds, flu and other respiratory infections:
 - Turn your head away from others.
 - Use a tissue to cover your nose and mouth.
 - Drop your tissue into a waste bin.
 - No tissues? Use your sleeve.
- The HSE's poster (below) is displayed throughout our school to remind children about what to do if they cough or sneeze. Click on the poster to access it on the HSE website (in Portable Document Format, PDF).



Cover your cough and sneeze (HSE, January 2020)

Hand Cleaning and Hygiene

- Helping your child to understand and practise good hand-hygiene at home will support and strengthen our efforts to do the same in school.
- Hand washing is scheduled for all children several times during the school day:
 - On arrival at school
 - Before eating or drinking
 - After using the toilet
 - After playing outdoors
 - When hands are physically dirty
 - When we cough or sneeze.
- Touch-free hand sanitisers are installed throughout the school for use after handwashing.

Brannoxtown Community National School

Brannockstown, Co. Kildare, W91 NY67.
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- Each classroom has a PPE Container for staff with disposable masks, gloves, aprons and a thermometer, to be used only if/as needed.

3. Arriving at and leaving the school

Small but necessary changes have been made to our procedures for using the school set-down area and school entrances and for managing visits to the building by non-school staff.

Using the School Set-Down

- Parking is available in the Baptist Church for Junior Infant parents and parents who wish to walk children to the school yard. All other parents use the school set-down area.
- We ask parents to remain in the driver seat when your car stops at the set-down.
- For young children, with child-locks on the inside of car doors, the teacher on duty will open the car door and help your child to the school yard.

Entrance to the School Building

- Children in Junior and Senior Infants use the side door to get to/from their classroom. This side entrance leads from the playground directly to the Junior Room.
- Children in all other classes use the main door.
 - Children in 1st, 2nd and 3rd Class will use the ramp.
 - Children in 5th and 6th Class will use the steps.

Visits to the School

- To keep our children safe, all visits to the school are by appointment only.
- All adult visitors to the school must wear masks.
- Appointments (e.g., to pay the General Purpose Fee or meet your child's teacher) can be requested by contacting Liz Kavanagh: brannoxtowncns@kwetb.ie.
- When coming to the school for your appointment, please use the main door.
- Use the buzzer to let Liz know you have arrived.
- On entry, use the hand-sanitiser and sign the Log Book adding arrival and leaving times.

4. Managing your Child's Belongings

Minimising the number of items travelling between home and school and ensuring children do not share their own belongings are key actions to help stop the spread of the virus.

Your Child's Belongings

- Please ensure your child's belongings (books, lunch box, stationery and uniform tops) are clearly labelled with his/her name. This is important for us to help children to manage their belongings.
- It is important that your child has all stationery items (on the Booklist) to ensure that each child uses their own stationery items only.
- Additional storage containers (one plastic basket per child) and coat hooks have been provided in each classroom to help your child to manage his/her belongings: coat, bag and lunch-box.
- Rental books are numbered and assigned to individual children to ensure each child uses only the books assigned to him/her. In some cases, children will also receive a school

Brannoxtown Community National School

Brannockstown, Co. Kildare, W91 NY67.
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rental book for home use, e.g., children may receive their own home-copy and school-copy of a class novel, for return and quarantine when finished.

- Shared stationery/books are removed from classrooms. Children will use their own belongings. All school items used by children (e.g., maths manipulatives) are thoroughly cleaned after use.

Pencil Cases, Personal Items and Uniform

- Children in all classes will also bring home their pencil case on Fridays, for cleaning and return to school on Monday.
- Unfortunately, stationery items, or any other items from home cannot be shared with other children in school. For this reason, children's belongings from home (e.g., toys for show-and-tell) cannot travel to school for sharing with other children; thank you for your understanding.
- During the 2020/2021 school year, children from 1st to 6th Class wear their school tracksuit on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays; children wear their formal school uniform on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. To support regular washing of your child's school uniform, parents can be flexible with this schedule, ensuring that the child comes to school each day wearing either the school tracksuit or formal school uniform.

Homework Folders

- Children in classes from first to sixth bring home their Homework Folder (Week A or Week B) on Fridays for use the following week at home. This routine enables us to guarantee a 72-hour quarantine period for items travelling from school to home.
- Also on Fridays, children return their Homework Folder from the previous week to school, also allowing a 72-hour quarantine period for items travelling from home to school.
- Homework Folders include four nights of homework (Monday to Thursday) focused on Maths and one other area.
- Children participating in the Afterschool Club bring their Homework Folder to school on Monday.

5. Understanding Classroom Layouts and Cleaning

Some significant changes have been made to our classroom layouts. Being aware of these changes and understanding the reason for them will enable you to discuss them with your child.

Classroom Organisation: Bubbles and Pods

- Schools were asked to use a Pod (grouping) system to plan for and effectively manage children's movement and interactions in the school.
- Our school of approximately 40 children is a Bubble. It has four Pods: Junior Infants, Senior Infants, Middle Classes (1st, 2nd and 3rd) and Senior Classes (5th and 6th).
- Children will play and work together in their class Pods. For example, children in Junior Classes use play-resources for their Pod; these are cleaned daily after school.
- Floor signage reminds all adults and children to keep left on the stairs. Other signage reminds staff and children about hand-washing, etc.
- Classroom doors and windows remain open as often as possible to maximise ventilation.

Brannoxtown Community National School

Brannockstown, Co. Kildare, W91 NY67.
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Cleaning

- Painting during the summer included metal and woodwork, e.g., pipes, radiators and doors to ensure these areas can be effectively cleaned during the year.
- A new *Cleaning Framework* prepared for our school describes the *Daily Clean* at Brannoxtown CNS this year including the equipment to be used, hygiene supplies, and specific areas/spaces to be cleaned.
- All cleaning supplies were procured during the summer to facilitate both the *Deep Clean* for re-opening and the daily clean at our school for the 2020/2021 school year.

6. Supporting Learning at Home

Over the summer period, to prepare for reopening, we've identified priorities for children's learning (in line with government advice), invested in outdoor interactive play spaces to increase children's outdoor time and further developed our use of the Class Dojo app to strengthen communications between home and school during the 2020/2021 school year.

Your Child's Curriculum

- Children's wellbeing is central to our curriculum this year.
- Our school is using the Weaving Wellbeing programme with children from 2nd to 6th Class.
- Physical Education time is increased this year to provide more time for physical exercise and games outdoors.
- Teaching and learning in literacy (English and Irish) and numeracy (Maths) will begin with children's own starting points and these are priority areas for learning.
- Teachers will use books and resources for your child's previous and current school years, as determined by your child's starting points for learning.
- Much of this year's planning for learning is thematic. Children will learn in different subject areas using the same themes and topics which are interesting and relevant to them.

Outdoor Furniture and Garden Areas

- Outdoor furniture for children will be installed at 7pm this evening with thanks to Mitzie Day (Parent Nominee on the Board of Management), for all her support this summer.
- Our new outdoor furniture includes a Pallet House, Mud Kitchen, Outdoor Classroom (benches and tree stumps) and wall-mounted blackboards.
- All classes will spend more time outdoors this year—exploring and investigating our school grounds and local environment.
- The Afterschool Club is held outdoors, as much as possible.
- Parents are welcome to help us continue to develop our outdoor play spaces, raised beds and garden. Please contact Liz to express your interest: brannoxtowncns@kwetb.ie.

Strong Home/School Communications

- Our school uses the Class Dojo (App/Site) to support children's learning and strong communications between home and school.
- Teachers will liaise with parents of new children to the school in September to help you to get set-up on the Dojo and to use it at home.
- Once set-up, the Class Dojo enables your child's teacher to share information with you about planned learning experiences for your child's class and snapshots of learning at school via the Class Story function.



- In the event of a school-closure, the Class Dojo enables teachers to provide individualised activities (assigned to individual children), add video instructions to lessons, provide feedback using specific feedback icons and create individual learning portfolios documenting their own learning story.

6. Taking Action if your Child is at Risk

The HSE's advice for parents (updated 18/09/2020) explains what to do if you think your child is unwell and may have Covid-19. This advice for children up to the end of primary school is available at: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/if-your-child-has-symptoms.html>

If you think your child may have Covid-19

- The HSE advice is not to send your child to school if any of the following is true, i.e., if your child has:
 - a temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or more
 - any other common symptom of coronavirus such as a new cough, loss or changed sense of taste or smell or shortness of breath
 - been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus
 - been living with someone who is unwell and may have coronavirus
 - an existing breathing condition that has recently got worse
- Parents are to take the following actions:
 - Isolate your child from other people by keeping them at home and avoiding contact with others, as much as possible.
 - Phone your GP who will advise you if your child needs a coronavirus test.
- Everyone that your child lives with should also restrict their movements until your child gets a diagnosis from their GP or a coronavirus test result. This means not going to school, childcare or work.
- Your child should only leave your home to have a test or to see your GP.

If your child has other symptoms

- The HSE advice is that if your child has symptoms such as headaches or a sore throat, you should keep them at home for at least 48 hours. These are not common symptoms of coronavirus, but they could be a sign of another infection.
- Parents and the rest of your family can continue your normal routine. You do not need to restrict your movements as long as you are not ill.
- After 48 hours it's usually okay to send your child back to school or childcare as long as:
 - their symptoms do not get worse
 - they do not develop new symptoms
 - they do not need paracetamol or ibuprofen during these 48-hours

If your child only has a runny nose or is sneezing

- The HSE advice is that parents do not need to restrict your child's movements if the only symptoms they have are a runny nose and/or sneezing.
- Children can continue to go to school if these are their only symptoms. A runny nose or sneezing on their own are more likely to be symptoms of a cold or other viral infection.

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If your child has travelled abroad

- The HSE advice is that your child will need to restrict their movements for 14 days if they have just returned from a country that is not on the '[green list](#)'. This means they should stay at home and not go to school. They do not need to see a GP unless they develop symptoms.

If your child has been in close contact with someone who has Covid-19

- The HSE advice, if your child has no symptoms but has been in close contact with someone who has coronavirus, is for your child to:
 - [restrict their movements for 14 days](#) - this includes not going to school
 - get tested for coronavirus - your GP can arrange this
- Parents should help children to do this even if they feel well.
- Household members, such as siblings, do not need to restrict their movements as long as the child has no symptoms.

If your child becomes unwell in school

- If, at school, a child becomes unwell or is suspected of having covid-19, the child will be brought to the isolation area.
- Staff will phone parents to note their concern. Parents are asked to organise for their child to be collected as soon as possible and within a half-hour of the phone call.
- Please ensure that our school has the most up-to-date contact information for you and your child's emergency contacts, including mobile phone numbers. Parents who work at a distance from the school, are asked to ensure an emergency contact is listed who lives close to the school and who can collect and care for your child.

6. Updating and Improving our Response Plan

- Our school's Covid-19 Response Plan was approved by our school's manager, the Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB) during the first week in September.
- Our school's Response Plan and this Overview for Parents will be monitored and updated to respond to new/amended government policies and/or advice.
- We welcome feedback from parents on any aspect of our school's Covid-19 Response Plan to: brannoxtowncns@kwetb.ie.
- Members of the Board of Management will continue to oversee the Covid-19 Response Plan for Brannoxtown CNS and will be updated on any changes as these arise.

On behalf of the staff and the Board of Management, thank you sincerely to all parents for your continued cooperation with all the changes/new procedures to keep our children safe and well as part of our Covid-19 Response Plan.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Sarah FitzPatrick'.

Sarah FitzPatrick, Principal
18 September 2020