



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills

Guidance for Primary Schools & Special Schools on PPE, Consumables and Equipment

Roadmap for the Full Return to School

7th August 2020

Introduction

As set out in the Roadmap for the Full Return to School, to ensure access for schools, on a value for money basis, to a secure supply chain for any Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), Consumables and Equipment associated with COVID-19 Response Plans, the Department has established, following a procurement process, a multi-supplier arrangement from which schools can choose suppliers and products which best suit their needs.

All PPE, consumables and equipment requirements of schools under the Roadmap and with schools COVID-19 Response Plans, and in line with the public health advice, will be available through the Supply Arrangement including:

- Hand sanitiser dispensers;
- Hand sanitiser liquid;
- Hand soap;
- Disposable Paper Towels;
- Wipes;
- Gloves;
- Face masks
- Face coverings
- Face visors;
- Aprons; and
- Detergents etc.

An information pack has been emailed directly to all schools, including a User Guide, which sets out the steps schools should follow when purchasing goods from suppliers under the Supply Arrangement.

Schools are encouraged to purchase their PPE and consumables requirements through this Supply Arrangement to the greatest extent possible to avail of the value for money achievable through the centralised procurement approach.

A COVID-19 Capitation Grant for PPE, Consumables and Equipment of €25 per pupil, with an enhanced rate of €100 per pupil attending a special school or attending a special class attached to a mainstream school will apply to fund school costs in this regard from reopening until the end of 2020 will apply. This capitation grant rate up to the end of 2020, reflects the fact that there are a number of once off type costs which schools face in implementing COVID-19 Response Plans (i.e. installation of sanitiser units, signage/posters etc.) which will be incurred upfront.

The COVID-19 Capitation Grant for 2021 up to the remainder of the school year, will be confirmed in December following review/monitor of usage in schools in the period up to the end of the year.

It is important to note that the COVID-19 Capitation Grant is specifically provided to support schools in minimising the risk of spread of infection of COVID-19. This COVID-19 Capitation Grant for PPE, Consumables and Equipment is ring-fenced funding provided to schools for the purchase of appropriate PPE, consumables and equipment (including signage, pedal bins where required etc.) required by schools in minimising the risk of spread of infection of COVID-19 in line with the Roadmap, public health advice, Return to Work Safely Protocol and their COVID-19 Response Plan and should only be used for that purpose. This includes PPE and consumables which may have been purchased by schools from sources outside of the Supply Arrangement established by the Department.

The following section provides some guidance to schools in identifying the potential volumes of PPE and consumables which they may require in line with their COVID-19 Response Plan.

Guidance on Volumes

Orders from schools will be processed by suppliers with a very short timeline and will be delivered directly to schools by suppliers. To ensure continuity of supply of products for all schools, schools should simply order their requirements for 2 – 4 week period, review usage in that period and adjust their order for their next 2 – 4 week period. This approach will also limit the storage requirements for products within school at manageable levels.

Given that each school setting is different, as will be reflected in their COVID-19 Response Plan, schools themselves are best placed to decide on the appropriate volumes of PPE and Consumables which they require. That being said, the following guidance is provided to schools to support them in this assessment process.

Hand Sanitizer Dispensers

Funding has been provided for schools to install and use hand sanitisers for each classroom, specialist rooms and other key locations (entry/exit points, staff room etc.) in their school. Each school should assess their need in this context. In the main, it is expected that hand sanitizers will be wall mounted, but schools have flexibility in this regard given the specific circumstances in their school.

Hand Sanitizer Fluid

The following table provides indicative range of potential the volumes of sanitizer fluid potential required each week for schools of different sizes.

| School Size | Estimated Litres per Week |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| 60 | 3 - 4 |
| 100 | 5 - 7 |
| 200 | 10 - 13 |
| 300 | 15 - 20 |
| 400 | 20 - 27 |
| 500 | 25 - 33 |

Schools should pay particular attention to volume usage in the first weeks of re-opening schools and adjust their volume orders accordingly.

PPE in the event of a Suspected Case

The COVID-19 Response Plan template outlines the steps schools should take in the event of a suspected case.

Schools should have a 'pack' of relevant PPE on hand to be able to respond to such event in line with the guidance in the COVID-19 Response Plan, including PPE for cleaning/disinfecting rooms where a pupil/staff member with suspected COVID-19 was present.

PPE for Staff (as required)

Ensure that any PPE requirements for staff, as required under the Roadmap, public health advice and COVID-19 Response Plan, is readily available for staff (including school bus escorts).

On the use of face masks by staff, schools should consider the specific circumstances where the use of medical face masks, to EU Standard EN 14683, may be more appropriate for staff (for example where staff by necessity need to be in close and continued proximity with students with intimate care needs such as SNAs or School Bus Escorts).

Face Coverings / Face Visors

The *Interim Guidance for the use of face-coverings in childcare and educational settings* provided by the HPSC on 6th August 2020 makes the following recommendations for use of face-coverings in childcare and educational settings

"It is not recommended that children attending primary school or pre-school/childcare settings wear face-coverings.

"It is recommended that teachers and staff in primary schools wear a face-covering when a physical distance of 2 meters from other staff or children cannot be maintained.

"In certain situations the use of clear visors should be considered, for example staff interacting with students with hearing difficulties or learning difficulties"

"Cloth face coverings should not be worn by any of the following groups:

- Primary school or pre-school children*
- Any person with difficulty breathing*
- Any person who is unconscious or incapacitated*
- Any person who is unable to remove the face-covering without assistance*
- Any person who has special needs and who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the face covering, for example persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, sensory concerns or tactile sensitivity"*

“Schools should consider having additional disposable face coverings available for students, teachers, and staff in case a back-up face covering is needed during the day”

Whilst staff may wish to utilize their own face covering on a day-to-day basis, schools should have available a stock of additional disposable or multi-use face coverings, or if appropriate face visors, available for staff in case a back-up face covering is needed throughout the day or where required on an ongoing basis.

Hand Soap / Paper Towels etc.

Notwithstanding the use of hand sanitizers in schools, it is anticipated that there will be an increase in the usage of hand soap, paper towels etc. in schools. Schools should use the volumes of hand soap, paper towels etc. they have typically used in previous years as a floor on the likely usage in the coming months, whilst making some provision for additional usage (10 to 20% increase). Again schools should monitor usage in the opening weeks closely, and adjust their volume orders accordingly.

Signage/Posters

The School COVID-19 Response plan advised that the Department would provide posters outlining signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene. The Department, with advice from the Department of Health, is currently printing a supply of A4 sized school specific posters to support the following health areas:

- General advice to schools
- Cough etiquette
- Child hand washing
- Hand hygiene adults
- Use of Face coverings
- Stay safe at Work
- How to use hand sanitiser
- Visitors at reception

A supply of these posters will be provided to schools in Irish and English and electronic versions of the posters will be available on [gov.ie/backtoschool](https://www.gov.ie/backtoschool) to allow schools to print additional copies locally if required. The funding provided for PPE can be used for these additional printing costs.

Access to signage (for floors, entrance/exit routes etc.) is also available from suppliers under the multi-supplier arrangement. While it is not anticipated that large amounts of signage will be required, it can be accessed by schools using the funding provided.