



An Roinn Oideachais  
agus Scileanna  
Department of  
Education and Skills

**Scoil Ruáin COVID-19 Response Plan**  
**for the safe and sustainable reopening**  
**of**  
**Scoil Ruáin, Killenaule.**

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This is a living document and may be reviewed and amended to take into account new guidance from [www.Gov.ie](http://www.Gov.ie), [www.dbei.ie](http://www.dbei.ie), [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie), [www.hpsc.ie](http://www.hpsc.ie), [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie); [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)

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## **1) Introduction**

The Minister for Education has published “*The Roadmap for the Full Return to School*” on the 27<sup>th</sup> July. It sets out what the operation of schools will look like and the range of supports which will be available in a COVID-19 context.

It has been developed in line with public health advice issued by the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) and in compliance with the “Return to Work Safely Protocols” developed by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and the Department of Health with guidance documents provided by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA). Each workplace is required to have a COVID-19 Response Plan. In addition to being places of learning, schools are also places of work. This document sets out the information that Scoil Ruáin needs to implement a School COVID-19 Response Plan, including a COVID-19 policy, lead worker representative and process to deal with a suspected case of COVID-19.

The purpose of this Response Plan is to provide clear and helpful guidance for the safe operation through the prevention, early detection and control of COVID-19 in Scoil Ruáin. It provides key messages to minimise the risk of COVID-19 for staff, pupils, families and the wider community while recognising the importance of education for the health and wellbeing of pupils and society as a whole.

This Response Plan focuses on the practical steps taken in Scoil Ruáin to minimise the risk of the introduction of infection into the school while recognising that no interpersonal activity is without risk of transmission of infection at any time. The documentation and templates in this Response Plan are supported by the public health advice provided by the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) for the safe reopening of schools and educational facilities. That report is available [here](#).

Further advice from the HPSC on the use of face coverings in educational settings was received on the 6th August. This advice is available [here](#).

One of the key challenges is to balance the need for a practical and sensible level of caution with the need to provide a supportive environment for teaching and learning. This document identifies the steps Scoil Ruáin can take to do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into the school and the steps that can be taken to reduce the likelihood of the spread within the school itself.

The Department has worked intensively with the education partners to develop consistent plans, advice, protocols and guidance for schools, including the School COVID-19 Response plan. There is a suite of documentation available to support schools to reopen safely and fully including guidance on learning, school programmes and wellbeing for the 2020/21 school year. There is also information on funding, staffing and resources to schools to support COVID-19 measures. Schools are advised to familiarise themselves with these documents. All of the documents will be available at [gov.ie/backtoschool](https://www.gov.ie/backtoschool)

## **2) What is a COVID-19 Response Plan?**

A Covid-19 Response Plan is designed to support the staff and Board of Management (BOM)/Education Training Board (ETB) in putting measures in place that aim to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in Scoil Ruáin.

The Covid-19 Response Plan details the policies and practices necessary for Scoil Ruáin to meet the Government's '*Return to Work Safely Protocol*', the Department of Education plan for school reopening and to prevent the introduction and spread of Covid-19 in the school environment.

It is important that the resumption of school-based teaching and learning and the reopening of school facilities complies with the public health advice and guidance documents prepared by the Department. Doing so minimises the risk to pupils, staff and others. The response plan supports the sustainable reopening of Scoil Ruáin where the overriding objective is to protect the health of staff and pupils while promoting the educational and development needs of the pupils in the school. The COVID-19 response plan is a living document and will be updated in line with the public health advice as appropriate for primary and special schools.

In line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol, the key to a safe and sustainable return to work, and reopening of Scoil Ruáin requires strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between the BOM/ETB, staff, pupils and parents.

The assistance and cooperation of all staff, pupils, parents, contractors and visitors is critical to the success of the plan.

## **3) Scoil Ruáin COVID-19 Policy**

The Scoil Ruáin COVID-19 policy outlines the commitment of the school to implement the plan and help prevent the spread of the virus. The policy is signed and dated by the chairperson and principal of the BOM/ETB and brought to the attention of the staff, pupils, parents and others.

## **4) Planning and Preparing for Return to School**

The BOM/ETB aims to facilitate the resumption of school based teaching and learning and the return to the workplace of staff. The return to the workplace must be done safely and in strict adherence to the public health advice and any guidance issued by the Department of Education.

Details for the safe reopening of the school facility and the applicable controls are outlined in this Response Plan.

Before reopening for the 2020/21 year Scoil Ruáin had processes in place to include the following:

- Arrangements to keep up to date with public health advice, changes to any Government plans for the safe reopening of society and Department of Education updates;
- Arrangements to pass on this information in a timely manner to staff, pupils, parents and others as required;
- Ensured that staff have reviewed the training materials provided by the Department of Education (**details at Section 4.1**);
- Provided staff with access to the Return to Work (RTW) form (**details at Section 4.2**);
- Identified 2 Lead Worker representatives (**details at Section 4.3**);
- Displayed posters and other signage to prevent introduction and spread of COVID-19 (**details at Section 4.4**);
- Made the necessary changes to the school or classroom layout to support the redesign of classrooms to support physical distancing (**details at Section 4.5**);
- Removed unnecessary clutter to facilitate ongoing cleaning of the school taking into account the importance of having educational materials to create a stimulating learning environment;
- Updated the health and safety risk assessment (**details at Section 4.6**);
- Made necessary arrangements to limit access to the school to necessary visitors and maintain records of contacts to the school (**details at 4.7**);
- Reviewed the school buildings to check the following:
  - Does the water system need flushing at outlets following low usage to prevent Legionella disease;
  - Has school equipment and mechanical ventilation been checked for signs of deterioration or damage before being used again;
  - Have bin collections and other essential services resumed.

#### **4.1) Induction Training**

All Scoil Ruáin staff have undertaken and completed Covid-19 Induction Training prior to returning to the school building. The aim of such training was 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;
- Outline of the Covid-19 response plan.

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 will be updated 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, who is supported in this role by the BOM/ETB

[Details of the training will be found here.](#)

A national information campaign to support parents and pupils has happened in advance of schools reopening on issues such as COVID-19 awareness and to help minimise the risk of introduction and spread of the virus in schools.

#### **4.2) Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)**

In order to return to the workplace, staff completed a **Return to Work (RTW)** form, which was available online or from the principal. A copy is attached also at **Appendix 2**.

A RTW form was completed and returned **3 days** before returning to work. **Staff who are absent from school for some time must complete a return to work form before returning to work.**



The principal also provided details of the **Induction Training** for completion by staff 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.

There are some school staff who may be unable to return to school. Current public health guidelines have identified these people as being in groups who are defined as being at **very high risk**. This will be updated in line with public health advice.

### **People at very high risk (extremely vulnerable):**

The list of people in very high risk groups include people who:

- are over 70 years of age - even if 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
- have severe respiratory conditions including cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, pulmonary fibrosis, lung fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and severe COPD
- have a condition that means they 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 are pregnant

The advice for this group is available from the HSE. Details of the arrangements that will apply for these staff, which will be in accordance with those applying for the public service generally, will be updated by the Department of Education following consultation with management bodies and unions and a circular will issue to all schools.

### **4.3) Lead Worker Representative**

The Protocol provides for the appointment of a Lead Worker Representative (LWR) in each workplace. The LWR will work in collaboration with management to assist in the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of COVID -19 and monitor adherence to those measures and to be involved in communicating the health advice around COVID-19 in the workplace.

This section sets out how the provisions will operate in Scoil Ruáin. Procedures for the appointment of the lead worker representative in Scoil Ruáin has been agreed centrally between the Department of Education and the education partners.

Strong communication and a shared collaborative approach is key to protecting against the spread of COVID-19 in schools, and looking after the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and students. Adherence to the Return to Work Protocol will only be achieved if everyone has a shared responsibility in implementing the measures contained within the Response Plan in Scoil Ruáin.

If a staff member has any concerns or observations in relation to the Covid-19 Response Plan, control measures or the adherence to such measures by staff, pupils or others he/she should contact the lead worker(s) who will engage with the principal/BOM.

#### **Role of the Lead Worker Representative**

In summary, the role of the LWR is to:

- Represent all staff in the workplace regardless of role, and be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of different staff cohorts;
- Work collaboratively with school management to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19;
- Keep up to date with the latest COVID-19 public health advice;
- In conjunction with school management, 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 school management with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace in line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol and current public health advice;
- In conjunction with school management, monitor adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19;
- Conduct regular reviews of safety measures;
- Report any issues of concern immediately to school management and keep records of such issues and actions taken to rectify them;
- Consult with the school management on the school's COVID-19 Response Plan in the event of someone developing COVID-19 while in school including the location of an isolation area and a safe route to that area;
- Following any incident, assess with the school management any follow up action that is required;
- Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace;
- Make representations to school management on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.

As Scoil Ruáin has more than 40 staff, a second Lead Worker Representative has been appointed.

<b><i>Name(s) of lead worker representatives:</i></b>	<b><i>Contact details:</i></b>
Jane O Connor	joconnor@tipperaryetb.ie
Liam Griffin	lgriffin@tipperaryetb.ie

All staff, pupils, parents, 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.

#### **4.4) Signage**

Scoil Ruáin will display signage in prominent areas such as offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilets, outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene.

#### **4.5) Making Changes to School Layout**

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.

Scoil Ruáin has reconfigured classrooms and social areas as necessary to support physical distancing in line with the guidance in advance of school reopening.

A one way system of movement around the school is in place and students have received training on how this will operate. Signage is in place to indicate the one way system.

In order to prevent crowding in locker areas students will no longer have access to lockers.

#### **4.6) Health and Safety Risk Assessment**

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment. A template risk assessment to identify the control measures required to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 in Scoil Ruáin is attached at **Appendix 4**.

Scoil Ruáin will review its 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 school's existing emergency procedures will be documented and incorporated into the school's safety statement.

Scoil Ruáin will also review its existing risk assessments to consider any new risks that arise due to the school's COVID-19 Response Plan. Any changes to the school's current risk assessments will also be documented and incorporated into the school safety statement.

#### **First Aid/Emergency Procedure**

The standard First Aid/emergency procedure shall continue to apply in Scoil Ruáin. In an emergency or in case of a serious incident, Scoil Ruáin will call for

an ambulance or the fire brigade on 112/999 giving details of location and type of medical incident.

#### **4.7) Access to School and Contact Log**

Access to the school building is by appointment only.

Arrangements for necessary visitors such as contractors and parents is restricted to essential purposes and limited to those who have obtained prior approval from the principal. Visitors will contact the office by phone on arrival in the carpark and remain in their vehicle until contacted by the school to enter the building.

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 will be maintained and kept in the office.

The school will also maintain a log of staff and pupil contacts. (See **Appendix 5**.)

The Data Protection Commission has provided guidance on the data protection implications of the return to work protocols. This advice can be found here:

<https://www.dataprotection.ie/en/news-media/data-protection-implications-return-work-safely-protocol>

Scoil Ruáin will maintain and process records and data in compliance with the GDPR and the Data Protection Acts.

### **5. Control Measures - To prevent Introduction and Spread of COVID-19 in Schools**

One of the key messages to manage the risks of COVID-19 is to do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into the school. If infection is not introduced it cannot be spread. The risk of spreading the infection once introduced exists in all interpersonal interactions; student-student, teacher-teacher and teacher-student and must be managed in all settings.

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 and visitors as far as possible within the school. The control measures shall continue to be reviewed and updated as required on an ongoing basis.

It is critical that staff, pupils, parents and visitors are aware of, and adhere to, the control measures outlined and that they fully cooperate with all health and safety requirements.

*Staff 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.*

#### **How to Minimise the Risk of Introduction of COVID-19 into Scoil Ruáin:**

Scoil Ruain will promote awareness of COVID-19 symptoms (**details at Section 5.1**);

- Staff and pupils that have symptoms should not attend school; they should phone their doctor for advice and follow HSE guidance on self-isolation if necessary;
- Staff and pupils should not attend school if they have been identified by the HSE as a contact for a person with COVID-19; they must follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement;
- Staff and pupils that develop symptoms at school must bring this to the attention of the Principal promptly;
- Scoil Ruáin has ensured that staff and pupils know the protocol for managing a suspected case of COVID-19 in school (**details at Section 8**);
- Students who are unwell for any reason in the morning should not attend school that day as there is no facility in the school to care for students who feel unwell and the school must minimise contact with persons outside of staff/students.
- Parents may not drop off items forgotten by their son/daughter during the day.

- Access by visitors to the school during the day is to be by prior arrangement only. Visitors will be received at the main entrance by the secretary/principal/deputy principal; other staff members should not grant visitors access to the building.
- In order to minimise contact with persons outside of school staff/students, parents are asked to arrange appointments for their son/daughter for out of school hours. There is no signout facility this year and students/parents may not go to the school office as before. If it is impossible to arrange an appointment for out of school hours, students can leave/enter the building between 12pm and 12.30pm only. Parents will contact the office by phone from the carpark to advise of their arrival and the student will then leave class/enter the school. Students will leave/enter once only.
- Everyone entering the school building needs to perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser;
- Physical distancing (of 2m) should be maintained between staff and visitors where possible.
- All staff or students who have been abroad in 'nongreen list countries' should not return to school until 14 days after arriving back in Ireland and instead are encouraged and required to self-isolate during this period. Please see the following link for the most up to date list of countries. We are encouraging this in the interest of the health and safety of our whole school community. <https://www.dfa.ie/travel/travel-advice/coronavirus/>

### 5.1) **Know the Symptoms of COVID-19**

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

## **5.2) Respiratory Hygiene**

Every member of the school community must 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 and safely into a nearby bin.

By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and Covid-19.

## **5.3) Hand Hygiene**

Staff and pupils should understand why hand hygiene is important as well as when and how to wash their hands.

Scoil Ruáin promotes good hygiene and posters are displayed throughout the schools on how to wash your hands. The HSE guidelines on handwashing are available at

<https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html>

Students will have access to hand washing facilities after activities that are likely to soil hands, for example, certain sporting activities as hand sanitiser does not work on dirty hands.

Hand sanitiser dispensers will be deployed at exit and entry points of the school and classrooms.

Wash hand basins, warm running water, liquid soap and hand drying facilities will be provided in all toilets, kitchens and any food preparation areas.

Posters displaying hand washing techniques and promoting hand washing will be placed on walls adjacent to washing facilities.

Hand sanitiser is suitable for use for hand hygiene when hands are not visibly soiled (look clean).

### **Frequency of Hand Hygiene**

Pupils and staff should **perform hand hygiene/sanitise their hands:**

- On arrival at school;



- Before eating or drinking;
- After using the toilet;
- After playing outdoors;
- When their hands are physically dirty;
- When they cough or sneeze.

#### **5.4) Physical Distancing**

Physical distancing will be applied allowing for some flexibility when needed. It will be applied in a practical way to recognise that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on this issue.

It must be recognised that it is not always possible for staff to maintain physical distance from pupils and it is not appropriate that they would always be expected to do so where this could have a detrimental impact on the pupil i.e. if a child sustains an injury and requires first aid.

However, where possible staff will maintain a minimum of 1m distance and where possible 2m. They will also take measures to avoid close contact at face to face level such as remaining standing rather than sitting beside/crouching down.

Physical distancing falls into two categories:

- Increasing separation
- Decreasing interaction

##### ***Increasing separation***

The guidance documents provided by the Department of Education on optimal school layout and referenced at **Section 4.5** above will be used by Scoil Ruáin to increase separation to the greatest degree possible

To maintain physical distancing in the classroom, the following actions have been carried out in Scoil Ruáin:

1. Reconfiguring of class spaces to maximise physical distancing
2. Ensuring wherever possible that the teacher's desk is at least 1m and, where possible, 2m away from pupil desks.
3. All available space in the school has been utilised and reconfigured in order to maximise physical distancing.

### ***Decreasing interaction***

A common-sense approach is required in recognising the limits to which decreasing interaction can be achieved between students in Scoil Ruáin.

Where possible a distance of 1m will be maintained between desks or between individual students.

Where possible work stations will be allocated consistently to the same students rather than having spaces which are shared.

Sharing educational material between students should be avoided/minimised where possible.

A new timetable and grid is in place for 2020/2021, 58 minute classes have replaced 40-minute classes. This will minimise the amount of times students will be on the corridors and break of classes.

All students will remain in base classrooms for as many classes as possible (students will have to move to practical classrooms) and teachers will move from class to class instead of students.

Lockers will not be available to students for the moment.

Students must bring their own water bottles as the water fountains will not be available.

A one way system will be in operation and all students will enter the main building through the two doors at the rear of the school and exit the main building by the two doors in the assembly area.

**Staff and students must sanitise their desks/chairs/work area every time they enter and leave the classroom.**

### ***Additional measures to decrease interaction include:***

Students and staff should limit interaction on arrival and departure and in hallways and other shared areas.

Students should avoid social physical contact (hand to hand greetings, hugs).

Where students need to move about within the classroom to perform activities (access to a shared resource) it should be organized to the greatest degree possible to minimize congregation at the shared resource.

Staff and students should not share personal items.

Students will be encouraged to avoid behaviours that involve hand to mouth contact (putting pens/pencils in the mouth).

Where teaching and learning involves use of keyboards or tablets, the contact surface of the device must be cleaned regularly and hand hygiene encouraged.

Students are encouraged to go outside (weather permitting) during break and lunch. Otherwise they will have to remain in their base classroom during breaks. Students must sit in their assigned places and continue to wear their mask. Lunches will be brought to the classrooms. Students should not delay when eating so that they can replace their mask as quickly as possible.

## **Physical Distancing outside of the classroom and within the school**

### ***School drop off/collection***

Students are encouraged to walk or cycle to school if possible.

A distance of 2m should be maintained between parents and guardians and between parents and guardians and school staff.

Parents/guardians are asked **not** to drop off/pick up their sons/daughters in the school grounds wherever possible.

When students arrive at school they must proceed immediately to their base classroom.

### ***School bus transport***

- All students on the post primary transport scheme were issued with the following advice issued by Bus Éireann:
  - o A student is not to use school transport if they are displaying symptoms
  - o Students are to maintain physical distancing while waiting for transport
  - o Students are asked to sit in pre-assigned seating and next to a sibling or child from their class group (this should always be the same child)

- o Students are requested to use hand sanitiser on boarding the bus
- o Students should always observe respiratory etiquette while waiting for and on-board transport services
- o Students should disembark the bus one by one in an orderly fashion
- With the exception of those children who for medical or special educational needs reasons are not in a position to wear a face mask or face covering, all other students travelling on the post-primary scheme are required to wear face coverings while waiting for and on-board transport services.
- When students arrive at school, they should proceed immediately to their base classroom.

### **Staff**

A distance of 2m is recommended for physical distancing by staff. This is particularly relevant to distancing between adults when they are not engaged in teaching such as the staff room and arriving to work.

If 2m cannot be maintained in staff groups, as much distance as is possible and updated guidance on face covering should be observed.

The staff room has been reconfigured to assist maintenance of the required physical distancing between adults. (2m) As there will be limited capacity in the staffroom, the library is available as an additional workroom for staff.

Staff members must observe the maximum number of people allowed in the staffroom/library and maintain the required physical distancing within the staff room and the library workroom.

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

Staff should avoid social physical contact (hand to hand greetings, hugs).

Staff should not gather at the beginning or end of the school day.

Staff can rotate between areas/classes but this should be minimized where possible.

### ***Canteen***

Physical distancing will be applied in canteen area/assembly area.

A queue management system is in place with signage marking out physical distances.

Students must clean their hands before and after entering the canteen/assembly area.

### ***Corridors***

Briefly passing someone in a hall is very unlikely to contribute significantly to the spread of infection provided that students/staff do not have physical contact. Informal group discussions in the corridors must be avoided.

### ***Yard/Supervision***

The risk of transmission from contact with outside surfaces is low.

Outdoor activities will be managed in order to minimise crowding at the entrance and exits.

Students are actively encouraged to perform hand hygiene before and after outdoor activities.

Minimise equipment sharing and clean shared equipment between uses by different people.

The additional supervision hours granted by the DES will be utilised to provide additional supervision in the morning before school and during break and lunch time.

### ***Ventilation***

Good ventilation can help reduce the risk of spreading coronavirus. Where possible, staff should consider ways to maintain and increase the supply of fresh air in the classroom, for example, by opening windows and doors (unless fire doors).

Staff should make every effort to prevent pockets of stagnant air occurring in occupied spaces – open windows and doors to create an air flow.

It is advisable to wear layers to protect against the cold and students will be allowed to wear coats if necessary.

### **5.5) Use of PPE in Scoil Ruáin**

Cloth face coverings act as a barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from travelling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the face covering coughs, sneezes, talks or raises their voice. Cloth face coverings are therefore intended to prevent transmission of the virus from the wearer (who may not know that they are infected) to those with whom they come into close contact.

It is therefore a requirement that teachers, staff and students attending post primary schools wear a face covering when a physical distance of 2m from other staff, students, parents or visitors cannot be maintained. As it is unlikely that, in operating a full return for all pupils, Scoil Ruáin will be able to offer 2 metres physical distancing at all times then face coverings must be worn.

In limited situations the use of clear visors can be considered, for example, staff interacting with students with hearing difficulties or learning difficulties. Visors do not offer the same level of protection as a face mask.

All students on the post primary transport scheme are required to wear face coverings unless there is a good reason not to do so.

A medical certificate to certify that a person falls into a category listed below must be provided to the school by, or on behalf of, any person (staff or student) who claims that they are covered by the exemptions below: Students must wear masks for the full day unless they have a medical reason not to do so. Breaks to mask wearing will be built in during the day. Students will not be required to wear masks in settings where they can observe more than two metres distance.

- Any person with difficulty breathing who cannot wear a cloth face covering or a visor
- Any person who is unable to remove the cloth face-covering or visor without assistance
- Any person who has special needs and who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the cloth face covering or visor, for example, persons with

intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, sensory concerns or tactile sensitivity.

**In circumstances where a medical certificate is not provided that person (staff or student) will be refused entry to the school.)**

PPE will also need to be used at certain work activities or work areas. These might include roles such as:

- Performing intimate care
- Where a suspected case of COVID-19 is identified while the school is in operation
- Where staff are particularly vulnerable to infection but are not in the list of those categorised as people in very high risk groups, or may be living with people who are in a very high risk category
- Administering first aid
- Parent Teacher meetings

Where staff provide healthcare to students with medical needs in the school environment they should apply standard precautions as per usual practice.

All staff and students wearing face coverings are reminded to not touch the face covering and to wash or sanitise their hands (using hand sanitiser) before putting on and after taking off the face covering.

Information on the proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings can be found at:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/aac74c-guidance-on-safe-use-of-face-coverings/>

Face coverings should be stored in a space designated for each student that is separate from others when not being worn (e.g., in individually labelled containers or bags).

**Students who do not have a face mask must ask their Year Head or the LWR for a spare mask.**

Cloth face coverings should be washed after every day of use and/or before being used again, or if visibly soiled.

Face coverings should not be worn if they are wet. A wet cloth face covering may make it difficult to breathe.

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

**In specific circumstances the use of medical face masks, to EU Standard EN 14683, may be more appropriate for staff, for example, where SNAs by necessity need to be in close and continued proximity with students with intimate care needs.**

Wearing a face covering or mask does not negate the need to stay at home if symptomatic.

### **Reception Areas/Offices/ classrooms**

Screens are provided in the reception area, Principal's and Deputy Principal's office, secretary's desk, staff room and teachers' desks where it is not possible for staff to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres from other staff or students.

### **Gloves**

The use of disposable gloves in the school by students or staff is not generally appropriate but may be necessary for cleaning, intimate care settings and when administering first aid. Routine use 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.

### **Aprons**

Aprons may be required in certain circumstances including for intimate care needs or for staff assigned to cleaning an area where a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 was present.



## 6. Impact of COVID-19 on certain school activities

The Department will work with stakeholders to provide more detailed advice on certain schools activities in advance of school reopening.

### *Choir/Music Performance*

Choir practices/performances and music practices/performances involving wind instruments may pose a higher level of risk and special consideration should be given to how they are held ensuring that the room is well-ventilated and the distance between performers is maintained.

### *Sport Activities*

Scoil Ruáin will follow HPSC guidance on Return to Sport protocols.

The link to the HPSC guidance on Return to Sport protocols is found here.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/07253-return-to-sport-protocols/>

For the time being Scoil Ruáin will not participate in training or sporting activities, This decision will be kept under review.

### *Shared Equipment*

All shared equipment should be checked for signs of damage, for example breaks or cracks. If they cannot be repaired or cleaned they should be discarded.

Clean equipment should be stored in a clean container or clean cupboard. The manufacturer's instructions should always be followed.

Art: Students are provided with their own individual art and equipment supplies.

Electronics: Shared electronic devices such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards should be cleaned between use. Wipeable covers for electronics would facilitate cleaning.

Musical Equipment/Instruments: To the greatest extent possible, instruments should not be shared between pupils and if sharing is required, the instruments should be cleaned between uses.

Schoolbooks: Students should have their own books. Textbooks that are shared should be covered in a wipeable plastic covering that can be wiped with a suitable household cleaning agent between uses. Students should be encouraged to perform hand hygiene after using any shared item.

School books will not be brought in and out of school – they must be kept either in school or at home. If kept in school they must be stored in pressed provided in order to facilitate sanitising of classrooms each evening. Homework/assignments will be set and received vis Teams.

Shared Sports Equipment: Sharing of sports equipment should be kept to a minimum and shared equipment must be cleaned and sanitised between uses by different people.

Practical Subjects: Scoil Ruáin will adhere to the DES Return to School Guidance for Practical Subjects in Post Primary Schools and Centres. Practical work will not commence until all practical rooms have been prepared according to the guidelines and practical teachers have submitted their Plan for running practical classes to the principal.

## 7. Hygiene and Cleaning in Schools

The Department of Education has additional funding to all schools to support the enhanced cleaning required to minimise the risks of COVID-19.

The specific advice in relation to school cleaning is set out in the HPSC advice and will be covered in the induction training. This advice sets out the cleaning regime required to support schools to prevent COVID-19 infections and the enhanced cleaning required in the event of a suspected cases of COVID-19. Staff are asked to carefully read and understand the cleaning advice and to apply that to all areas of the school as appropriate.

Staff and students must take particular care of the hygiene arrangements for hand washing and toilet facilities.

The school will be cleaned at **least once per day**. Additional cleaning, if available, will be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, hand rails, 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 building.

Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area in the classroom/staffroom/library before and after use each day.

There will be regular collection of used waste disposal bags from classrooms/offices and other areas within the school facility. To facilitate collection of waste disposal bins from the classrooms, staff are asked to arrange for the bin bags to be tied and placed outside the classroom each evening. New bin liners should be put into the bins. Gloves will be provided for this purpose.

Students will not have access to changing rooms/showers. Students should wear their Scoil Ruáin track suit on the day they have PE. No track suit, no PE.

Staff must bring in, use and bring home for cleaning their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.)

***Cleaning/Disinfecting rooms where a pupil/staff member with suspected COVID-19 was present***

The room will be cleaned as soon as practicably possible.

Once the room is vacated the room will not be reused until it has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry.

Disinfection only works on things that are clean. When disinfection is required it is always as well as cleaning.

The person assigned to cleaning should avoid touching their face while they are cleaning and should wear household gloves and a plastic apron.

The environment and furniture will be cleaned using disposable cleaning cloths and a household detergent followed by disinfection with a chlorine based product (household bleach).

Special attention will be paid to frequently touched surfaces, the back of chairs, couches, door handles and any surfaces that are visibly soiled with body fluids.

Once the room has been cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry, the room can be reused.

If a pupil or staff diagnosed with COVID-19 spent time in a communal area, assembly area or if they used the toilet or bathroom facilities, then the areas will be cleaned with household detergent followed by a disinfectant (as outlined in the HPSC interim health advice) as soon as is practically possible.

## **8. Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19**

Staff or students should not attend school if they, or any member of their household, are displaying any symptoms of COVID-19. They should contact their GP immediately for further advice.

Scoil Ruáin has put a designated isolation area in place for staff and students with suspected COVID 19 symptoms.

If a staff member/student displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school the following procedures will be implemented:

- If the person with the suspected case is a student, the parents/guardians will be contacted immediately;
- The symptomatic person (if a student) will be brought by the teacher to the designated isolation area via the isolation route. The person accompanying the symptomatic student/staff member must keep at least 2m away from him/her and also make sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2m from the symptomatic person at all times;
- If it is not possible to maintain a distance of 2m a staff member caring for a student ( or other staff member) should wear a face covering or mask. Gloves should not be used as the virus does not pass through skin;
- The person presenting with symptoms will wear a mask. He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises;
- The teacher will inform the principal/deputy principal that the student/staff member is in the isolation unit.
- The principal/deputy principal will assess whether the individual who is displaying symptoms can immediately be directed to go home/be brought home by parents who will call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home;  
The person presenting with symptoms will be facilitated to remain in isolation if they cannot immediately go home. They will also be facilitated to call their doctor. The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. The person presenting with symptoms will be advised 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, the principal/deputy principal/secretary will arrange for them to be transported home by a family

member, as soon as possible and they will be advised to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms. Siblings of a symptomatic student will also have to go home and follow GP/public health advice about self-isolation. Public transport of any kind should not be used;

- If the symptomatic person is too unwell to go home or advice is required, the principal/deputy principal will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a Covid-19 suspect;
- The principal/deputy principal/LWRs will carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery;
- The isolation area and work areas involved will be cleaned. HSE guidance recommends waste such as cleaning waste, tissues etc. from a person suspected of having COVID-19 should be double bagged and stored in a secure area for 72 hours before being presented for general waste collection.
- Scoil Ruáin will maintain a record of all students/staff who have used the isolation room.
- The principal will follow the TETB guide for Principals if there is a confirmed case of Covid 19. See Appendix 10 – should this be in the Response Plan?

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 principal will provide the HSE with all details sought. The instructions of the HSE will be followed and staff and pupil confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

**Decisions on who is contacted, what are close contacts, next steps in terms of a pod, class, school closure etc will be for the HSE and public health teams. It is not for the school and/or Department of Education.**

## **9. Special Educational Needs**

### **Additional considerations for those with Special Educational Needs**

For students with special educational needs (SEN) maintaining physical distancing in many instances will not be practical or appropriate to implement. The focus will therefore be on emphasising that parents/guardians should have a heightened awareness of signs, symptoms or changes in baseline which suggests

illness/COVID-19 infection and where symptoms are present children should not attend school.

Similarly staff should be aware of their responsibility not to attend work if they develop signs or symptoms of respiratory illness.

### *Hand hygiene*

Students who are unable to wash their hands by themselves should be assisted to clean their hands using soap and water or a hand sanitiser (if their hands are visibly clean) as outlined previously.

### *[Equipment*

Some students may have care needs (physical or behavioural) which requires the use of aids and appliances and/or medical equipment for example toileting aids, moving and handling equipment, respiratory equipment. Where cleaning of aids and appliances is carried out in school, a cleaning schedule will be provided, detailing when and how the equipment is cleaned and the cleaning products to be used in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions.

The following points can guide the development of such cleaning schedule:

- Equipment used to deliver care should be visibly clean;
- Care equipment should be cleaned in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions. Cleaning is generally achieved using a general purpose detergent and warm water.
- Equipment that is used on different children must be cleaned and, if required, disinfected immediately after use and before use by another child e.g. toileting aids;
- If equipment is soiled with body fluids:
  - First clean thoroughly with detergent and water;
  - Then disinfect by wiping with a freshly prepared solution of disinfectant;
  - Rinse with water and dry.]

## **10. Staff Duties/Responsibilities**

Staff have a statutory obligation to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of their colleagues and other parties. 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. In this regard and in order to facilitate a safe return to work, these

duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Adhere to the Scoil Ruáin COVID-19 Response Plan and the control measures outlined.
- Complete the RTW form before returning to work.
- Inform the principal if there are any other circumstances relating to COVID19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to facilitate their safe return to the workplace.
- Complete COVID-19 Induction Training and any other training required prior to returning to school.
- Be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices.
- Coordinate and work with colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained.
- Be aware of the symptoms of COVID-19 and monitor their own wellbeing.
- Self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any symptoms of COVID-19.
- Not return to or attend school if they have symptoms of COVID-19 under any circumstances.
- If they develop any symptoms of COVID-19 whilst within the school facility, they should adhere to the procedure outlined above.
- Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.

## **11. COVID-19 related Absence Management**

The management of a COVID-19 related absence will be managed in line with agreed procedures with the Department of Education.

## **12. Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme**

The Department of Education recognises the need for school staff wellbeing and collective self-care. 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'*.

Under the EAS, employees have a dedicated free-phone confidential helpline 1800 411 057 available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year providing advice on a range of issues such as wellbeing, legal, financial, mediation, management support etc. Where required, short-term counselling is available to employees and their families (over the age of 18 years and living at home). A bespoke wellbeing portal and app which offers access to podcasts and blogs on topics around wellbeing and mental health, family life, exercise and nutrition is also available. In addition online cognitive behavioural therapy is provided. As part of the services provided by Spectrum.Life a Mental Health Promotion Manager is available to develop and deliver evidence based mental health and wellbeing initiatives to reduce stigma and improve mental health literacy and to increase engagement with the service. They will also be providing a series of webinars and presentations to promote staff wellbeing in schools as schools reopen and during the upcoming school year.

In addition to the supports provided by the DES, Scoil Ruáin has established a Staff Welfare/Wellbeing Committee to support all staff at this time of increased uncertainty and anxiety.



## **APPENDIX 1**

## **COVID-19 Policy Statement**

Scoil Ruáin 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 COVID-19 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 will:

- continue to monitor our COVID-19 response and amend this plan in consultation with our staff
- 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
- 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
- keep a contact log to help with contact tracing
- ensure staff engage with the induction / familiarisation briefing provided by the Department of Education
- implement the agreed procedures to be followed in the event of someone showing symptoms of COVID-19 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 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(s), who will be supported in line with the agreement between the Department and education partners.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 2 Pre-Return to Work Questionnaire COVID-19**

This questionnaire must be completed by staff **at least 3 days** in advance of returning to work.

If the answer is Yes to any of the below questions, you are advised to seek medical advice before returning to work.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

	Questions	YES	NO
1.	Do you have symptoms of cough, fever, high temperature, sore throat, runny nose, breathlessness or flu like symptoms now or in the past 14 days?		
2.	Have you been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection in the last 14 days?		
3.	Have you been advised by the HSE that you are you a close contact of a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days?		
4.	Have you been advised by a doctor to self-isolate at this time?		
5.	Have you been advised by a doctor to cocoon at this time?		
6.	Have you been advised by your doctor that you are in the very high risk group? If yes, please liaise with Principal re return to work and follow the agreed DES arrangements for very high risk groups		

I confirm, to the best of my knowledge that I have no symptoms of COVID-19, am not self-isolating or awaiting results of a COVID-19 test and have not been advised to restrict my movements.

Please note: The school is collecting this sensitive personal data for the purposes of maintaining safety within the workplace in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The legal basis for collecting this data is based on vital public health interests and maintaining occupational health and this data will be held securely in line with our retention policy.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Appendix 3: Lead Worker Representative – Post primary Schools**

The COVID-19 Return to Work Safely Protocol is designed to support employers and workers to put measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID19 in the workplace. The Protocol was developed following discussion and agreement between the Government, Trade Unions and Employers at the Labour Employer Economic Forum.

The Protocol provides for the appointment of a Lead Worker Representative (LWR) in each workplace. The LWR will work in collaboration with the employer to assist in the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of COVID -19 and monitor adherence to those measures and to be involved in communicating the health advice around COVID-19 in the workplace.

The purpose of this section is to set out the provisions in respect of the LWR in schools. These arrangements will operate for the 2020/21 school year and will be kept under review by the parties.

This document should be read in conjunction with:

- the COVID-19 Return to Work Safely Protocol;
- the Guidance and FAQs for Public Service Employers during COVID-19;
- COVID-19 Response Plan for Post primary Schools (available on the Department of Education website).

#### **1. Collaborative Approach**

Responsibility for the development and implementation of the COVID-19 Response Plan and the associated control measures lies with the Board of Management/ Education and Training Board and school management.

Strong communication and a shared collaborative approach is key to protecting against the spread of COVID-19 in schools, and looking after the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and students. Adherence to the Return to Work Protocol will

only be achieved if everyone has a shared obligation in implementing the measures contained within the Protocol in their place of work.

If a staff member has any concerns or observations in relation to the COVID-19 Response Plan, control measures or the adherence to such measures by staff, students or others, they should contact the LWR who will engage with school management.

## **2. Role of the Lead Worker Representative**

The role of LWR is separate to that of the Safety Representative under the health and safety legislation. However the Safety Representative may act as the LWR if selected to do so by the staff.

In summary, the role of the LWR is to:

- Represent all staff in the workplace regardless of role, and be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of different staff cohorts;
- Keep up to date with the latest COVID-19 public health advice;
- Work collaboratively with school management to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19;
- Consult with school management on the control measures required to minimise the risk of staff and students being exposed to COVID-19;
- Promote good hygiene practices, in conjunction with school management, such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette along with maintaining social distancing in accordance with public health advice;
- Assist school management with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace in line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol and current public health advice;
- Monitor, in conjunction with school management, adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19;

- Conduct reviews of safety measures that are in place to address and suppress COVID-19 in the workplace. Reviews (including an examination of the workplace) should be conducted on a regular basis (at least twice per week);
- Report any issues of concern immediately to school management and keep records of such issues and actions taken to rectify them;
- Consult with the school management on the school's COVID-19 Response Plan in the event of someone developing COVID-19 while in school including the location of an isolation area and a safe route to that area;
- Following any incident, assess with the school management any follow up action that is required;
- Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace;
- Make representations to school management on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID 19 in the workplace.

#### **4. What can a Lead Worker Representative Do?**

The LWR may consult with, and make representations to, school management on any issue of concern in relation to COVID-19. These include issues in relation to:

- Cleaning protocols and their implementation
- Physical Distancing
- Configuration/re-configuration of the school facilities, including classrooms, corridors, halls, open areas, entry and exit points, school grounds etc.
- Implementation of one-way systems in the school to ensure social distancing including when entering and exiting the school
- Hand Hygiene facilities including their location and whether they are stocked and maintained
- Hand sanitising
- Staff awareness around hand hygiene in the school
- Respiratory hygiene
- Personal Protective Equipment
- At Risk Groups
- Visitors/Contractors

#### **4. Does a LWR have any legal responsibilities?**

No. A Lead Worker Representative does not have any duties in relation to COVID-19 other than those that apply to employees generally. In other words, the LWR is not responsible for the control measures within an organisation, which remains the employer's responsibility.

#### **5. Lead Worker Representative(s)**

Every school will appoint one Lead Worker Representative.

In schools with more than 40 staff, a second Lead Worker Representative will be appointed.

#### **6. Selection of Lead Worker Representative(s)**

The school staff are entitled to select staff members for the LWR position(s). The LWR(s) represent all staff in the workplace regardless of role and must be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of different staff cohorts. In this regard, where a school has two LWRs, the roles should be spread between teaching and non-teaching staff where feasible e.g. where there is a significant number of non-teaching staff in the school and one or more expressions of interest are received from that cohort (this will be discussed further between the parties).

The process for the selection and appointment of the LWR(s) is that management will seek expressions of interest from all staff in the first instance. A template email for this purpose is attached. If an election is necessary, all school staff have a vote to select the LWR(s).

The LWR(s) will, following selection by the school staff, be formally appointed by the BoM/ETB. The LWR(s) will be required to confirm, prior to taking up the role, that they have been provided with and have completed the requisite training and that they are fully aware of the requirements of the role.

#### **7. Supports for the Lead Worker Representative/s**

The LWR(s) shall be entitled to:

- Be provided with information and training in respect of their role [further detail to be provided];
- Be consulted by school management on the control measures being put in place by the school to minimise the risk of being exposed to COVID-19.

Regular communication with school management on issues related to COVID-19;

- Be informed of changes in practice arising from COVID-19 response measures;
- Have access to any risk assessments prepared or carried out in relation to COVID-19 and to details of incidents of suspected COVID-19 cases that have been notified to the HSE, where they occurred and any actions taken.
- Be provided with the necessary facilities to enable them to consult with employees or prepare any submissions or reports. These might include access to a meeting room, photocopier, communications and equipment.

Where the LWR is a teacher, the LWR will receive protected time of 2 hours per week from timetable to enable them to carry out their duties in that role. In the rare instances where the appointment of a teacher selected for the LWR would cause curricular/timetabling difficulties which cannot be resolved, school management will examine internal and external possibilities to enable the teacher's appointment as LWR. Where the matter cannot be resolved, management will set out the reasons why this is the case. In this circumstance, an alternative individual must be appointed as LWR.

Where the LWR is an SNA, 66 of the "72 hours" will be utilised by the LWR to carry out their duties in that role.

Where the LWR is a Secretary or Caretaker, a re-prioritisation of duties by school management should be carried out to afford the staff member sufficient time to carry out their duties in that role within the scope of their normal contracted hours.

## **8. Procedure for dealing with issues that arise**

Where a COVID-19 control concern is identified by the LWR (or is notified to the LWR by a staff member), the LWR should bring this to the attention of the Principal. Action points for addressing the issue should where possible be agreed between the LWR and the Principal as a matter of urgency. Staff should be informed of the outcome. It is envisaged that issues will be resolved at school level to the maximum extent possible.

If agreement cannot be reached, the LWR should notify the Board of Management (Chairperson in the first instance)/ Education and Training Board head office of the issue. Action points for addressing the issue should where possible be agreed between the LWR and the BoM/ETB head office as a matter of urgency. Staff should be informed of the outcome.



If, having exhausted the process above, a serious issue of concern remains outstanding, the LWR may have recourse to the Health and Safety Authority.

### **9. Glossary of Terms**

- COVID-19 Response Plan: plan designed to support the staff and BOM/ ETB in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the school environment. The plan details the policies and practices necessary for a school to meet the Return to Work Safely Protocol, the Department of Education plan for school reopening and to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in the school environment. COVID-19 Response Plans for Post primary Schools are available on the Department's website.
- Labour Employer Economic Forum (LEEF): the forum for high level dialogue between Government, Trade Union and Employer representatives on matters of strategic national importance - involves the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Government & Employers.
- Return to Work Protocol: national protocol designed to support employers and workers to put measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID19 in the workplace.
- Safety Representative: Section 25 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 sets out the selection and role of the Safety Representative in the workplace. The rights of the Safety Representative are set out in legislation. (Note: A Safety Representative has rights and not duties under the 2005 Act). This role is separate to the LWR under COVID-19, but the Safety Representative may act as the LWR if selected to do so by the staff.

### **TEMPLATE EMAIL TO STAFF REGARDING LEAD WORKER REPRESENTATIVE APPOINTMENT PROCESS**

Dear All,

As you will be aware, significant work and consultation has taken place to enable a full return to school from the beginning of the 2020/21 school year.

The resumption of school-based teaching and learning and the return to the workplace of staff must be done safely and in strict adherence to the advice and instructions of public health authorities and the Government.

The COVID-19 Return to Work Safely Protocol is designed to support employers and workers to put measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID19 in the workplace. The Protocol was developed following discussion and agreement between the Government, Trade Unions and Employers at the Labour

Employer Economic Forum. In addition, every school has a COVID-19 Response Plan in place.

The Return to Work Safely Protocol provides for the appointment of a Lead Worker Representative (LWR) in each workplace.

The LWR will work in collaboration with the employer to assist in the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of COVID -19 and monitor adherence to those measures and to be involved in communicating the health advice around COVID-19 in the workplace.

A copy of the school's COVID-19 Response Plan is attached and this includes further detail on the role of the Lead Worker Representative.

In this school, there are 2 Lead Worker Representative positions.

Under the Protocol, the school staff are entitled to select staff members for the LWR position(s). In this regard, I am now inviting expressions of interest from staff for these positions, by return email.

The LWR(s) represents all staff in the workplace regardless of role and must be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of different staff cohorts.

Where a school has two LWRs, the roles should be spread between teaching and non-teaching staff where feasible e.g. where there is a significant number of non-teaching staff in the school and one or more expressions of interest are received from that cohort.

Training for the role will be provided.

If an election is necessary, all school staff have a vote to select the LWR(s). Further details on this process will be sent to you if this arises. Following selection by the school staff, the LWR(s) will be formally appointed. The LWR details will be sent to all staff following their appointment.

Yours sincerely,

---

Principal

### Appendix 4 Risk Assessment

COVID-19 Risk Template (List identifies COVID-19 as the hazard and outlines control measures required to deal with this risk)

Hazards	Is the hazard present?	What is the risk?	Risk rating H=High M=Medium L=Low	Controls (When all controls are in place risk will be reduced)	Is this control in place	Action/to do list/outstanding controls  *Risk rating applies to outstanding controls outlined in this column	Person responsible	Signature and date when action
COVID-19	N	Illness	H	School Covid19 Response Plan in place in line with Department of Education guidance and the Return to Work Safely Protocol and public health advice		<p><i>Examples of Actions</i></p> <p>Follow public health guidance from HSE re hygiene and respiratory etiquette</p> <p>Complete School COVID-19 Policy Statement</p> <p>Return to Work Forms received and reviewed</p> <p>Induction Training provided</p> <p>Contact log in place</p> <p>Complete checklists as required:</p>	Name of staff member	

If there is one or more High Risk (H) actions needed, then the risk of injury could be high and immediate action should be taken. Medium Risk (M) actions should be dealt with as soon as possible. Low Risk (L) actions should be dealt with as soon as practicable.

Risk Assessment carried out by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:        /        /

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**Appendix 5 Contact Tracing Log**

<b>Name of School</b>			<b>School Contact Person</b>	
<b>Address of School</b>			<b>For Queries only: Phone No</b>	
			<b>Email</b>	
<b>Name of Visitor</b>				Was the visit pre-arranged with the Principal? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Date of Visit</b>	___ / ___ / _____	<b>Time</b>	<b>Entry to school</b> _____ am <input type="checkbox"/> pm <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Exit from School</b> _____ am <input type="checkbox"/> pm <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Visitor Status</b>	Contractor <input type="checkbox"/>	Parent/Guardian <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Please complete: _____
<b>Contact details of visitor</b>	Company Name (if applicable)			
	Address			
	Contact No.		Email Address	
	Reason for Visit			
<b>Who the visitor met (separate line required for each person the visitor met)</b>				
<b>Name of Person visited</b>				<b>Length of time spent with each person in the school</b>


## **Appendix 6 Checklist for School Management**

### **Composite Checklist for Schools**

This checklist supports planning and preparation, control measures and induction needed to support a safe return to school for pupils, staff, parents and others.

For completion by the agreed person with overall responsibility of managing the implementation of the COVID-19 Response plan in line with the supports as agreed with Department of Education.

### **Planning and Systems**

1. Is there a system in place to keep up to date with the latest advice from Government and Department of Education, to ensure that advice is made available in a timely manner to staff and pupils and to adjust your plans and procedures in line with that advice?
2. Have you prepared a school COVID-19 response plan and made it available to staff and pupils? ***Department guidance and templates provided***
3. Have you a system in place to provide staff and pupils with information and guidance on the measures that have been put in place to help prevent the spread of the virus and what is expected of them?
4. Have you displayed the COVID-19 posters in suitable locations highlighting the signs and symptoms of COVID-19?
5. Have you told staff of the purpose of the COVID-19 contact log?
6. Have you a COVID-19 contact log in place to support HSE tracing efforts if required? ***(Contact log template attached)***
7. Have you informed staff on the measures and provided a system for them to raise issues or concerns and to have them responded to?
8. Have you reviewed and updated risk assessments in line with DES advice to take account of any controls to help prevent the spread of COVID-19? ***(Risk template attached)***
9. Have you updated emergency plans, if necessary to take account of the COVID-19 response plan?

### **Staff**

10. Have you made available to each staff member a COVID-19 return-to-work form to be completed and returned 3 days before they return to the workplace? ***(Template attached)***

11. Are you aware of staff members who are at very high risk under the HSE guidance on people most at risk (HSE guidance on people most at-risk) and advised them of the DES agreed arrangements for management of those staff?
12. Have you advised staff and pupils they must stay at home if sick or if they have any symptoms of COVID-19?
13. Have you told staff and pupils what to do and what to expect if they start to develop symptoms of COVID-19 in school, including where the isolation area is?
14. Have you advised staff of the availability of the supports of the occupational health and wellbeing programme through Spectrum Life?
15. Has a lead worker representative been identified (in line with the process agreed with the DES and education partners) and detailed at Section 4.3 of this plan to help advise staff and to monitor compliance with COVID-19 control measures in the school and taken measures to ensure all staff know who the representative is?

### **Training and Induction**

16. Have you advised staff to view the Department of Education's training materials which are available online?
17. Have you taken the necessary steps to update your school induction / familiarisation training to include any additional information relating to COVID-19 for your school?
18. Have first aiders, if available, been given updated training on infection prevention and control re: hand hygiene and use of PPE as appropriate? (*It is intended that training will be provided as part of the Department's online training programme*).

### **Buildings / Equipment**

19. If you have mechanical ventilation does it need cleaning or maintenance before the school reopens?
20. Does your water system need flushing at outlets following low usage to prevent Legionnaire's Disease?
21. Have you visually checked, or had someone check, all equipment in the school for signs of deterioration or damage before being used again?
22. Have you arranged for the school, including all equipment, desks, benches, doors and frequent touched surfaces points, to be cleaned before reopening?

### **Control Measures in place**

#### **Hand / respiratory hygiene**

23. Have you accessed supplies of hand sanitisers and any necessary PPE equipment in line with the interim HPSC health guidance relating to the reopening of schools,

from the national framework provided by the Department? (RFI published and framework available from early August).

24. Are there hand washing/hand sanitising stations in place to accommodate staff, pupils and visitors adhering to hand hygiene measures in accordance with Department guidance?
25. Have arrangements been made for staff and pupils to have regular access to hand-washing/hand sanitising facilities as appropriate?
26. Are hand sanitisers easily available and accessible for all staff, pupils and visitors – e.g. in each classroom and at entry and exit points to school buildings?
27. Have you made arrangements to ensure hand hygiene facilities are regularly checked and well-stocked?
28. Does the alcohol-based hand sanitiser have at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol as the active ingredient?
29. Have you informed staff about the importance of hand washing?
30. Have you arranged for staff to view how to wash their hands (with soap and water for at least 20 seconds) and dry them correctly through the use of the HSE video resource?
31. Have you shown staff and pupils how to use hand sanitiser correctly and where hand-sanitising stations are located?
32. Have you displayed posters on how to wash hands correctly in appropriate locations?
33. Have you told staff and pupils when they need to wash their hands or use hand sanitiser? This includes:
  - before and after eating and preparing food
  - after coughing or sneezing
  - after using the toilet
  - where hands are dirty
  - before and after wearing gloves
  - before and after being on public transport
  - before leaving home
  - when arriving/leaving the school /other sites
  - after touching potentially contaminated surfaces
  - if in contact with someone displaying any COVID-19 symptoms
34. Has you told staff and pupils of the importance of good respiratory measures to limit the spread of the virus?
  - avoid touching the face, eyes, nose and mouth
  - cover coughs and sneezes with an elbow or a tissue
  - dispose of tissues in a covered bin



### **Physical Distancing:**

35. Have you identified all available school space to be used to maximise physical distancing?
36. Have you reviewed the templates provided by the Department of Education which show options for revised layout of school rooms to meet physical distancing requirements?
37. Have you arranged to revise the layout of the rooms and furniture as per the Department guidelines if necessary?
38. Have you arranged in each room that the teacher's desk should be at least 1m and where possible 2m away from pupil desks?
39. Have you arranged in each room that pupils would be at least 1m away from each other?
40. Have you allocated work stations consistently to the same staff and children rather than having spaces that are shared?
41. Have you structured pupils and their teachers into Class Bubbles (i.e. a class grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible) and discrete groups or "Pods" within those class bubbles to the extent that this is practical?
42. If you have divided a class into Pods, have you arranged at least 1m distance between individual Pods within the class bubble and between individuals in the pod, whenever possible?
43. Have you taken steps to limit contact and sharing of common facilities between people in different Class Bubbles (and Pods within those class bubbles) as much as possible?
44. Have you arranged Pod sizes to be as small as it is likely to be reasonably practical in the specific classroom context?
45. Have you arranged to the greatest extent possible for pupils and teaching staff to be consistently in the same Class Bubbles acknowledging that this will not be possible at all times?
46. Have you arranged where possible that different class bubbles to have separate breaks and meal times or separate areas at break or meal times?
47. Have you made arrangements to limit interaction on arrival and departure from school and in other shared areas?
48. Have you encouraged walking or cycling to school as much as possible?
49. Have you made arrangements, in so far as practicable, to open additional access points to school to reduce congestion?
50. Can you provide a one system for entering and exiting the school, where practical?
51. Have you arranged for staff meetings to be held remotely or in small groups or in large spaces to facilitate physical distancing?

52. Have you a system to regularly remind staff and pupils to maintain physical distancing
53. Have you advised staff not to shake hands and to avoid any physical contact?

### **Visitors to Schools**

54. Have you identified the activities that involve interacting with essential visitors to the school, made arrangements to minimise the number of such visitors and put in place measures to prevent physical contact, as far as possible?
55. Are there arrangements in place to inform essential visitors to the school of the measures to help prevent the spread of infection?
56. Have you a system in place for all visitors who do need to come to the school to make appointment, arrange to contact a central point and to record their visit using the contact tracing log?

## **Appendix 7 Checklist for dealing with a suspected case of COVID-19**

Staff members will be required to manage a suspected case in line with the protocol and training.

A nominated member of the school management team will be responsible for ensuring that all aspects of the protocol to deal with suspected cases have been adhered to.

### **Isolation Area**

1. Have you identified a place that can be used as an isolation area, preferably with a door that can close?
2. The isolation area does not have to be a separate room but if it is not a room it should be 2m away from others in the room.
3. Is the isolation area accessible, including to staff and pupils with disabilities?
4. Is the route to the isolation area accessible?
5. Have you a contingency plan for dealing with more than one suspected case of COVID-19?
6. Are the following available in the isolation area(s)?
  - Tissues
  - Hand sanitiser

- Disinfectant/wipes
- Gloves/Masks
- Waste Bags
- Bins

### **Isolating a Person**

7. Are procedures in place to accompany the infected person to the isolation area, along the isolation route with physical distancing from them?
8. Are staff familiar with this procedure?
9. Have others been advised to maintain a distance of at least 2m from the affected person at all times? *(it is intended that this will be dealt with as part of the Department's online training)*
10. Is there a disposable mask to wear for the affected person while in the common area and when exiting the building?

### **Arranging for the affected person to leave the school**

11. Staff – have you established by asking them if the staff members feel well enough to travel home?
12. Pupil – have you immediately contacted their parents/guardians and arranged for them to collect their pupil? Under no circumstances can a pupil use public or school transport to travel home if they are a suspected case of COVID-19.
13. The affected person should be advised to avoid touching other people, surfaces and objects.
14. The affected person been advised to cover their mouth and nose with disposable tissue(s) when they cough or sneeze, and to put the tissue in the bin.
15. Has transport home or to an assessment centre been arranged if the affected person has been directed to go there by their GP?
16. Has the affected person been advised not to go to their GP's surgery or any pharmacy or hospital?
17. Has the affected person been advised they must not use public transport?
18. Has the affected person been advised to continue wearing the face mask until they reach home?

### **Follow up**

19. Have you carried out an assessment of the incident to identify any follow-up actions needed?
20. Are you available to provide advice and assistance if contacted by the HSE?

## **Cleaning**

- 21.** Have you taken the isolation area out-of-use until cleaned and disinfected?
- 22.** Have you made arrangements to clean and disinfect any classroom space where the staff or pupils were located?
- 23.** Have you arranged for cleaning and disinfection of the isolation area and any other areas involved, as soon as practical after the affected person has left the building?
- 24.** Have the cleaners been trained in dealing with contaminated areas and supplied with the appropriate PPE? *(It is intended to provide online training for cleaning staff. Appropriate PPE will be available to schools through the national procurement process which schools can access before reopening).*

## **Appendix 8 Checklist Lead Worker Representative**

1. Have you agreed with your school to act as a Lead worker representative for your school? (*Process for agreeing on lead worker representative/s in schools to be agreed centrally and implemented locally*).
2. Have you been provided with information and training in relation to the role of lead worker representative? (*Training for this role is currently being explored with the HSA*).
3. Are you keeping up to date with the latest COVID-19 advice from Government?
4. Are you aware of the signs and symptoms of COVID-19?
5. Do you know how the virus is spread?
6. Do you know how to help prevent the spread of COVID-19?
7. Have you watched and do you understand the online Induction Training provided by the Department of Education before returning to school?
8. Are you helping in keeping your fellow workers up to date with the latest COVID-19 advice from Government?
9. Have you completed the COVID-19 return-to-work form and given it to your school? (*Department template Return-to-Work form available*)
10. Are you aware of the control measures your school has put in place to minimise the risk of you and others being exposed to COVID-19? (*Checklist for School Management available*)
11. Did your school consult with you when putting control measures in place? *Control measures will be agreed centrally between the Department and education partners. Consultation at school level should take place on any specific local arrangements necessary to implement the protocol*
12. Have you a means of regular communication with the person with overall responsibility for the school COVID-19 plan?
13. Are you co-operating with your school to make sure these control measures are maintained?
14. Have you familiarised yourself with the cleaning requirements needed to help prevent cross contamination? (*Checklist for Cleaning and Disinfection available*)
15. Have you been asked to walk around and check that the control measures are in place and are being maintained?
16. Are you reporting immediately to the person with overall responsibility for the school COVID-19 plan any problems, areas of non-compliance or defects that you see?
17. Are you keeping a record of any problems, areas of non-compliance or defects and what action was taken to remedy the issue?

- 18.** Are you familiar with what to do in the event of someone developing the symptoms of COVID-19 while at school?
- 19.** Are you co-operating with your school in identifying an isolation area and a safe route to that area? (*Checklist for dealing with suspected case of COVID-19 available*)
- 20.** Are you helping in the management of someone developing symptoms of COVID-19 while at school?
- 21.** Once the affected person has left the school, are you helping in assessing what follow-up action is needed?
- 22.** Are you helping in maintaining the contact log?
- 23.** Have you been made aware of any changes to the emergency plans or first aid procedures for your school?
- 24.** Are you making yourself available to fellow staff to listen to any COVID-19 control concerns or suggestions they may have?
- 25.** Are you raising those control concerns or suggestions with your school and feeding back the response to the worker who raised the issue?
- 26.** Are you aware of the availability of the Spectrum Life Wellbeing Together Programme?

## **Appendix 9 Checklist for Cleaning**

1. Have you a system in place for checking and keeping up to date with the latest public health advice from Government and the Department of Education, to ensure that advice is made available in a timely manner in order to adjust your cleaning procedures in line with that advice?
2. Have you reviewed the HPSC interim health advice for the safe reopening of schools, in particular **Section 5.6 Environmental Hygiene?**
3. Have you explained the need for the enhanced cleaning regime to staff?
4. Are you aware that cleaning is best achieved using a general purpose detergent and warm water, clean cloths, mops and the mechanical action of wiping and cleaning, following by rinsing and drying?
5. Have you sufficient cleaning materials in place to support the enhanced cleaning regime?
6. Have you provided training for cleaning staff on the enhanced cleaning regime? (*Department of Education intends to provide online training for cleaning staff*)
7. Have you made arrangements for the regular and safe emptying of bins?
8. Are you familiar with the cleaning options for school settings set out in the interim HPSC health advice for schools for surfaces, toilets, cleaning equipment, PPE and waste management?
9. Are you aware that each school setting should be cleaned once per day?
10. Have you provided cleaning materials to staff so that they can clean their own desk or immediate workspace?
11. Have you advised staff that they are responsible for cleaning personal items that have been brought to work and are likely to be handled at work or during breaks (for example, mobile phone and laptops) and to avoid leaving them down on communal surfaces or they will need to clean the surface after the personal item is removed?
12. Have you advised staff and pupils to avoid sharing items such as cups, bottles, cutlery, and pens?
13. Have you put in place a written cleaning schedule to be made available to cleaning staff including:
  - Items and areas to be cleaned
  - Frequency of cleaning
  - Cleaning materials to be used
  - Equipment to be used and method of operation?
14. Details of how to clean following a suspected case of COVID-19 are at **Section 7 of the Plan above**

- 15.** If disinfection of contaminated surfaces is required, is a system in place to do this following cleaning?
- 16.** If cleaning staff have been instructed to wear gloves when cleaning are they aware of the need to wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water, both before and after wearing gloves?
- 17.** Have you a system in place for the disposal of cleaning cloths and used wipes in a rubbish bag? *Current HSE guidance recommends waste such as cleaning waste, tissues etc. from a person suspected of having COVID-19 should be double bagged and stored in a secure area for 72 hours before being presented for general waste collection.*
- 18.** Have you ensured there is a system in place to make sure reusable cleaning equipment including mop heads and non-disposable cloths are clean before re-use?
- 19.** Have you ensured there is a system in place to ensure that equipment such as buckets are emptied and cleaned with a fresh solution of disinfectant before re-use?



## **Appendix 10 [from TETB]**

### **Guide for Principals- should there be a Confirmed Covid 19 Case.**

#### **Contact the HSE and contact the Director of Schools.**

- o The contact number for HSE Public Health Offices:
- o 061 483338 MidWest
- o 0567784142 SouthEast

#### **Stages of Communication:**

**Stage 1:** You receive a call confirming a Covid 19 case (in a staff member or a student).

**Stage 2:** Contact HSE immediately (numbers above). Leave a message if you get no answer and state you are Principal of a School having been notified of a confirmed case.

To date, the experience of ETBs nationally is that the Public Health Officer will take the following information over the phone:

- Name of school – Address of school – Number of students – Number of staff (Principal, teachers, SNAs, ancillary staff)
- Information on students and staff in direct contact with confirmed case.
- Queries if any other persons displaying symptoms
- Information on Classroom layout – Movements of person with confirmed case (arrival arrangements/mode of transport, route to isolation room, hall, playground (incl times), etc)
- Had everyone in the class concerned worn a mask?

Public Health Officer may ask for the following information to be emailed:

- Isolation Room record

- Contact details for pupils in class: Name, gender, DoB, Address, Parent/Guardian contact information (Names, emails, mobile numbers)
- Contact details for staff in class: Name, DoB, Address, email, mobile numbers.
- Plan of class, school and play area (location of class, route to yard/hall, isolation room routes, arrival to school route)
- Class student absences

**Stage 3:** The HSE will carry out a risk assessment based on the information you provide.

**Stage 4:** The HSE directs the course of action the School must follow.

### **Confidentiality:**

The school cannot give out information regarding identifying confirmed cases in the school community, nor identifying close contacts (and by association siblings of close contacts) to the school community, including class levels. These persons (close contacts are identified via the HSE risk assessment process) are contacted by the HSE directly. This is by Department and HSE directive.

Please note, it may be the case that having conducted a risk assessment, the HSE advice is that no further action is to be taken by the school i.e. this means that no restrictions of movement will be advised and testing is not recommended. Confidentiality is also a priority in this scenario as any commentary, even though well intended, may lead to unintended consequences. If the HSE advice is not to do anything, then you should not say anything. If in doubt, contact the Director of Schools.

### **Preparation for a school:**

- Each class and year group details available in an excel document
- Excel file of staff DOBs and contact details (available from Director as required)
- Seating plan readily available and ready to be shared (Seating plan for base class and seating plan for subject options)

- Document for all year groups with students who have or are being tested with potential return dates after quarantine

**Clarifications:**

- Close contact: up to 2 hours consecutive, with masks and 1m distance (e.g. in a base class)
- Casual contact: up to 1 hour, with masks and 1m distance (e.g. in a subject option)
- Day zero is defined as the day the pupil, confirmed with Covid 19 displayed symptoms
- Recommendations on 10 days restricted movements- may be backdated to last day confirmed case was in school and is important to discuss with medical officer.

**Media enquiry:**

If there is clearly no case, state:

'We can confirm that there are at present no confirmed cases of Covid-19 among our school community. We continue to work in line with our protocols set out by the HSE and DES for the Re-opening of Schools. Any further enquiries should be addressed to our school patron TETB. Telephone: 067 31250 or 052 6121067

**In all other cases:**

Thank you for your enquiry. Media Enquiries should be addressed to our school patron TETB.: Telephone: 067 31250 or 052 6121067

The information above is based on information as of the 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020, and will be updated as necessary.

## **Appendix 11 template doc issued by the DES**

### **Health and Safety Control of COVID-19 Policy for students**

#### **Advisory Note for schools in using this template**

This template Health and Safety Control of COVID-19 Policy for students has been developed by the Department of Education and is intended as a guide for schools in how they can set out for students and parents/guardians, the COVID-19 health and safety control measures to be followed by students in their school and ensure that any non-adherence to the measures concerned can be addressed by the school through the school's code of behaviour for students.

As individual circumstances and codes of behaviour may vary from school to school, it may be necessary for some schools to adjust the template having regard to the specific provisions in the school's own code of behaviour and/or to their own particular circumstances. Every school should therefore ensure that any adjustment required is made prior to adopting and implementing this template policy. In that regard it is also very important for schools to be aware that any disciplinary sanction taken by a school against a student must be in accordance with the school's code of behaviour and relevant requirements of the EWS guidelines on Developing a Code of Behaviour and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

Schools are also reminded of the need to support the implementation of this policy by:

- Focussing on creating a positive and safe environment for teaching and learning in the particular context of COVID-19
- Ensuring that all students are made aware of the public health requirements as they relate to schools in a COVID-19 context and the particular context of the students' own school
- Encouraging students to take personal responsibility for their actions and create and nurture a positive climate that reinforces good behaviour

## **Health and Safety Control of COVID-19 Policy for Students**

### **Scoil Ruáin**

#### **1. Introduction**

Under the Safety Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, the board of management/ETB of Scoil Ruáin as employer is required to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of all employees of the school. The employer is further required to manage and conduct the school in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that individuals at the place of work who are not employees, such as students, parents/guardians, visitors to the school, are not exposed to risks to their safety, health or welfare.

This policy is influenced by the need to minimise the risk of introduction of COVID-19 into the school community and to prevent its spread. Although it is acknowledged that no single action or set of actions will completely eliminate the risk of COVID-19 transmission, adherence to this policy will contribute to the reduction of that risk of transmission.

In accordance with this policy students are expected to comply with the standards of behaviour set out in this policy or as directed by the school to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19. The COVID-19 control measures are consistent with current advice from the HSE, the Health and Safety Authority, the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Foreign Affairs and, as such, may be subject to change. Students and parents/guardians will be notified of any changes to the control measures.

Students are expected to comply with all directions from school staff in relation to the school's COVID-19 control measures. Any failure or refusal to comply with this policy or to follow instructions of school staff should be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

Parents/guardians are required to supply the school with a phone number/s of available person/s who can be contacted at all times and who will be available to collect a student from the school should the need arise.

## 2. Symptoms of COVID-19

Symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to symptoms of cold or flu. The most common symptoms are:

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath
- loss of sense of smell or taste

More information regarding the most up-to-date signs and symptoms of COVID-19 is available on the HSE website, <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>.

## 3. Standards of Behaviour expected of students to help prevent the introduction or spread of COVID -19 in the school

Students are expected to comply with any control measures directed by the school to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19, including, but not limited to:

- maintaining a social-distance of at least 1 metre and where possible, 2 metres, from other students and staff;
- wearing a face covering. All students at post-primary level, are required to wear a face covering subject to a limited number of exceptions set out in relevant Department of Education guidance. Face coverings must not contain any slogans/logos/images that may cause upset or be deemed offensive to any member of the school community.
- performing hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser on entering the school.
- repeating hand-hygiene at regular intervals throughout the school day and when directed by school staff;
- maintaining good respiratory-hygiene. In this regard students should:

- ✓ cover nose/mouth with a tissue when coughing/sneezing and dispose of used tissue in waste bin and perform hand hygiene
  - ✓ cough or sneeze into the inner elbow (upper sleeve) rather than into the hand, if no tissues are available.
  - ✓ keep contaminated hands away from the eyes and nose
  - ✓ carry out hand hygiene after contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects/materials
  - ✓ not spit or deliberately cough or sneeze at or towards any other person in the school
  - ✓ not sharing materials or stationery, such as pens, calculators, rulers, etc. with other students;
  - ✓ not attending school for 14 days after returning from travel out of the country in line with Government guidelines for travel;
- not attending school if displaying COVID-19 like symptoms and remaining out of school for such period as is required in accordance with HSE/GP advice
- not attending school where tested positive for COVID-19 and remaining out of school for such period as is required in accordance with HSE/GP advice
- not attending school if identified by the HSE as a person who has been in contact with another person who has contracted COVID-19 and remaining out of school for such period as is required in accordance with HSE/GP advice;
- not attending school if a member of the student's household is displaying COVID-19 symptoms and remaining out of school for such period as is required in accordance with HSE/GP advice
- telling a teacher or other member of staff where a student feels unwell at school. In that regard –
- ✓ the student will require to be collected from the school as soon as possible by a parent/guardian or a person designated by the parent/guardian for such purpose.
  - ✓ parents must ensure that the school has up-to-date contact details so that they can be contacted by the school if required.
- complying with any other such directions as advised by the DES and/or HSE and communicated to the school community.

Students should be aware that the above is a non-exhaustive list. Students are expected to follow all instructions from staff which aim to prevent the introduction of COVID-19 into the school and minimise its spread.

#### **4. Failure to comply with the standards of behaviour**

Failure by a student to comply with the standards of behaviour expected to help prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 will constitute a breach of the Code of Behaviour of Scoil Ruáin and s/he may be subject to sanction up to and including suspension or permanent exclusion.

Any actions or sanctions taken in respect of alleged breaches of the code of behaviour will be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the school's code of behaviour, the requirements of the EWS Guidelines on Developing a Code of Behaviour and relevant requirements of the Education and Welfare Act 2000. Sanctions will be proportionate to the nature, seriousness and context of the behaviour.

A student engaging in aggressive, threatening or unacceptable behaviour that creates or increases the risk of COVID-19 infection for staff, other students or visitors to the school may be removed from class and, if necessary, from the school premises with immediate effect, pending any further action to be taken in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.