****

**Bunscoil na Toirbhirte COVID-19 Response Plan**

**August 2020**

13th August 2020

 Updated Feb. 21

**Revision:**

10

**Date**:

**Prepared by:**

Safety Solutions Group

**Organisation:**

Bunscoil na Toirbhirte

**Address:**

Church Road, Mitchelstown, Co. Cork, P67 FE82



CONTENTS

 INTRODUCTION 3

 WHAT IS A RESPONSE PLAN? 4

 COVID-19 RESPONSIBILITY 4

 POLICY AND PROCEDURES DEVELOPMENT 5

 HOW IS THE VIRUS SPREAD? 6

 SCHOOL COVID-19 POLICY 6

 COVID-19 POLICY STATEMENT 7

 CONTROL MEASURES 8

 RETURN TO SCHOOL 8

 COVID-19 Response Team 8

 Members of COVID-19 Response Team 8

 Lead Worker Representative Team 9

 Role of the Lead Worker Representative Team 9

 Assistant Lead Worker Representative 10

 Health & Safety Management System 10

 COVID-19 Screening Form 11

 Induction Training 11

 Legionella 11

 PROCEEDURE FOR RETURNING TO WORK 11/12

 I NGREES & EGRESS 13

 Arrival to the Building 13

 Sanitising Point 13

 Use of the lift 14

 Use of Stairs 14

 Emergency Evacuation 14

 Exiting the Building 14

**CIRCULATION WITHIN THE SCHOOL** 14

 Sanitising Points 15

 General Circulation 15

 Floor layout of Classrooms 15

 Classroom Hygiene 15

 Staff Room 16

 First Aid 16

**WELFARE FACILITIES** 17

 Bins and Disposal 17

 Printers, Photocopiers and Other Devices 17

 Access to School and Contact Logs 17

 Visitors 17

**GENERAL MEASURES** 18

 Hand washing/ Sanitising 18

 Physical Distancing 19

 Ventilation 19

 Cough Etiquette 20

 Cleaning 20

 Record Keeping 21

 Training 21

 Communication 21

 Travel 21

 Infection Prevention Control Measures 21

 **PPE 22**

 Gloves 23

 Aprons 23

**IMPACT OF COVID -19 ON SCHOOL ACTIVITIES** 24

 Choir/Music Performance 24

 Toys 24

 Art 25

 Electronics 25

 Musical Equipment/ Instruments 25

 Library Policy 25

 Sports Equipment 25

 **DEALING WITH A SUSPECTED COVID-19 CASE IN THE SCHOOL** 25/26

**ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR THOSE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS** 27

**STAFF DUTIES**  28

**COVID-19 RELATED ABSENCE MANAGEMENT**  29

**EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE AND WELLBEING PROGRAMME** 29/30

**APPENDIXES**

Appendix 1: COVID -19 Screening Form

Appendix 2: Lead Worker Representative Primary and Special Schools

Appendix 3: Checklist for School Management

Appendix 4: Checklist for dealing with a suspected case of COVID-19

Appendix 5: Checklist Lead Worker Representative

Appendix 6: Checklist for Cleaning

**INTRODUCTION**

This response plan has been complied after consultation with Bunscoil na Toirbhirte and a site visit to Bunscoil na Toirbhirte, Church Road, Mitchelstown, Co. Cork, P67 FE82. Information contained in this response plan is based on public health advice at the time of compilation. Users should refer to the latest public health advice issued by the HSE, NSAI and other government agencies as the situation develops.

A revision of the Bunscoil na Toirbhirte COVID-19 Response Plan took place in February 2021 to allow for the safe and sustainable operation of Primary and Special Schools. This was necessary to ensure that it is in compliance with the Government’s Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19 and the ‘Work Safely Protocol’ which has been 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).

The ‘Work Safely Protocol’ is a revised version of the ‘Return to Work Safely Protocol’ and contains many of the elements and features of the original guidance but is updated to reflect the latest advice issued by Government and National Health Emergency Team (NPHET) to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.

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 primary schools need to review their 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 document is to provide clear and helpful guidance for the safe operation through the prevention, early detection and control of COVID-19 in primary and special schools. 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 document focuses on the practical steps which can be taken in primary and special schools to minimise the risk of the introduction of infection into schools while recognising that no interpersonal activity is without risk of transmission of infection at any time. The documentation and templates in this booklet are supported by the public health advice provided by the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) for the safe reopening of schools and educational facilities.

Further advice from the HPSC on the use of face coverings in educational settings was received on the 6th August 2020.

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 schools 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 continue to operate 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.

**WHAT IS A RESPONSE PLAN?**

A COVID-19 Response Plan is designed to support the staff and Board of Management (BOM) of Bunscoil na Toirbhirte in putting measures in place that aim to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in the school environment.

The COVID-19 Response Plan details the policies and practices necessary for a school to meet the Government’s ‘ Work Safely Protocol’, to prevent the introduction and spread of Covid-19 in the school environment.

It is important that school-based teaching and learning and the operation 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 operation of schools 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 Work Safely Protocol, the key to maintaining a safe school requires strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between the BOM, staff, pupils and parents.

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

Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information provided in this document. However, should errors or omissions be identified, please notify us so that appropriate measures can be taken to rectify same.

**COVID-19 RESPONSIBILITY**

Bunscoil na Toirbhirte has a legal duty of care for the health, safety and wellbeing to employees, pupils and others under the law of negligence, the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, the Occupier’s Liability Act 1995 and, in respect of the control of contagious diseases, under the Health Act 1947.

It is the responsibility of the Board of Management (BOM) to ensure that this duty is uncompromised at all times. The measures contained within this response plan are to this end.

**POLICY AND PROCEDURES DEVELOPMENT**

This response plan and associated measures have been compiled using information available in the public domain from the following bodies and organisations:

* The Department of Education & Skills
* The Health Service Executive (HSE)
* The Department of Health
* The Health and Safety Authority (HSA)
* National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI)
* Other Irish Governmental Regulatory Bodies
* The World Health Organisation (WHO)

This response plan and any subsequent revisions/updating shall be co-ordinated and approved by Bunscoil na Toirbhirte before re-issue and changed pages described in the revision table below.

**Revision**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Rev | Description | Section | Approved By | Date |
| 1.0 | Middle Management Review | All | Safety Solutions | 18/08/2020 |

A controlled copy of the document will and shall be retained by Bunscoil na Toirbhirte.

**WHAT IS COVID-19?**

COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It’s caused by a new (novel) Coronavirus virus called CoronavirusSARS-CoV-2. Current evidence suggests that the virus is significantly more infectious than the flu that circulates every winter. Viruses can be easily spread to other people and patients are normally infectious until all the symptoms have gone. COVID-19 may survive on surfaces for up to 72 hours. A combination of good personal hygiene and management of physical distancing can protect from infection.

**Common symptoms include:**

* High Temperature (38°C or above)
* Cough
* Shortness of Breath
* Breathing Difficulties
* Loss or Change to Sense of Smell or Taste.

In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death. It is noted that some people infected with the virus have experienced no symptoms at all.

**HOW IS THE VIRUS SPREAD?**

The virus is spread by two main vectors:

* Close contact with others who have contracted the virus. This virus can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth which are spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs or exhales. This is why physical distancing must be maintained between individuals.
* Contracting COVID-19 by touching items, work surfaces, etc. that have infected droplets on them and touch your own nose, mouth or eyes.

**School COVID-19 Policy**

A COVID-19 policy outlines the ongoing commitment of the school to implementing the plan and help prevent the introduction and spread of the virus. The revised updated policy will be signed and dated by the chairperson and principal of the BOM/ETB and brought to the attention of the staff, pupils, parents and others. A template of a School COVID-19 policy can be found below.

**BUNSCOIL NA TOIRBHIRTE COVID-19 POLICY STATEMENT**

Bunscoil na Toirbhirte 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, pupils and families 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: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**CONTROL MEASURES**

This COVID-19 Response Plan has identified control measures under the following heading:

* Return to School
* Ingress & Egress
* Circulation Within the School
* General Measures

**RETURN TO SCHOOL**

Bunscoil na Toirbhirte aims to facilitate the resumption of school-based teaching and learning and the return to the workplace of staff. The return to the workplace shall be done safely and in strict adherence to the public health advice and any guidance issued by the Department of Education.

* **COVID-19 Response Team**

Bunscoil na Toirbhirte will establish a COVID-19 Response Team and provide them with the necessary resources to effectively manage the school’s response to COVID-19.

The Response Team will, on a daily basis, monitor public health advice, changes to any Government plans for the safe reopening of society and Department of Education updates and will make arrangements to pass on this information in a timely manner to staff, pupils, parents and others as required.

**Members of the Covid 19 Response Team**

Michael McCarthy

Trish Lambe

Niamh Hyland

Eilis Watson

Teresa Cahill

Mairead O’ Brien

Bridie McGrath

**Lead Worker Representative**

A Lead Worker Representative (Michael McCarthy) has been appointed. They will work in collaboration with the school 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 school.

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.

Responsibility for the development, updating and implementation of the COVID-19 Response Plan and the associated control measures lies primarily with the Board of 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 Work Safely Protocol will only be achieved if everyone has a shared responsibility 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, 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 implementing infection prevention control measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace in line with the 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.

**ASSISTANT LEAD WORKER REPRESENTATIVE**

An Assistant Lead Worker Representative (Patricia Lambe) has been appointed in addition to the LWR. The role of the Assistant LWR will be to:

• assist the LWR in their duties as set out above and deputise as LWR where the LWR is absent

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 infection prevention control measures.

Full details of the arrangements which will apply for the LWR in primary and special schools is set out at Appendix 2.

**HEALTH & SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

The current Health & Safety Management shall include the COVID-19 Risk Assessments and Control Measures.

**COVID-19 Screening Form**

At least 3 days before returning to school, each member of staff is to complete a COVID-19 Screening Form (Appendix 1). If a member of staff answers ‘Yes’ to any of the questions, they shall be advised to seek medical advice before returning to school.

**Induction Training**

Before returning to work all staff are to complete induction training. This will include up to date advice and guidance on:

* what a staff member should do if they develop symptoms of COVID-19;
* details of how the workplace is organised to address the risk from COVID-19;
* an outline of the COVID-19 response plan;
* identification of points of contact from the school and the staff.

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 their duties, they should immediately seek guidance from the Principal, who is supported in this role by the BOM.

**Legionella**

Legionella can pose a risk where there has been a significant change in the usage of the water system within a building. Bunscoil na Toirbhirte shall ensure that the school Legionella Control Plan is adhered to and where any concerns arise in relation to Legionella that a competent person is consulted.

**PROCEEDURE FOR RETURNING TO WORK**

In order to return to the workplace, staff must complete a Return to Work (RTW) form, which is available online or from the principal. A copy is attached also at Appendix 1.

A RTW form should be completed and returned to the school before returning to work. Schools should request staff to confirm that the details in the Return to Work Form remain unchanged following subsequent periods of closure such as school holidays.

The principal will also provide 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 working arrangements that apply to the very high risk school staff, is in accordance with those applying for the public service generally, and is detailed in the relevant Department of Education circulars available on the Department’s website.

**INGRESS & EGRESS**

Entering and/or leaving the school has the potential to be high risk in terms of COVID-19. The following control measures are to be in place.

* **Arrival to the Building**

Starting times will be staggered to minimise the number of pupils arriving at any one time. Pavement and playground markings will indicate queuing direction and correct physical distancing positions.

Signage will be erected at the entrance and exits to the school to inform staff, pupils and visitors of the current COVID-19 restrictions in place. All signage is to be in keeping with current HSE guidelines and will be age appropriate.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/2da43-signage-for-reopening-of-schools/>

Each class shall have a designated entrance and exit door. The use of entrance and exit doors will be staggered to ensure physical distancing between classes.

Face covering are recommended for adults in all indoor areas where physical distancing may be compromised.

* **Sanitising Points**

Sanitising points are in place on all entrance and exit points to the school. Staff, pupils and visitors must sanitise hands on entering and leaving. Signage showing correct hand sanitising techniques to be at each station. Teachers will teacher correct handwashing techniques and cough etiquette.

An appointed person will be responsible for the maintenance of sanitising points. Alcohol-based sanitiser must not be stored or used near heat or naked flame.

* **Use of the Lift**

Lift surfaces, in particular call buttons and the internal control panel are frequent touch points.

* **Use of Stairs**

Staff, pupils and visitors are to follow signage when ascending or descending the public area stairs. Where possible, there should be no passing on the stairs.

Handrails on the public area stairwells are for safety purposes. They are however a frequent touch point. Handrails will be regularly sanitised, and a documented record maintained of this.

* **Emergency Evacuation**

Should a building need be evacuated, documented emergency evacuation procedures apply. These evacuation procedures are maintained within the Fire Register. Staff, pupils and visitors should not stop to sanitise hands on exit and should exit through the nearest emergency exit.

Physical distancing should be maintained where possible at the Assembly Areas. Assembly Areas have been reviewed in relation to this.

* **Exiting the Building**

Where possible, class finishing times are to be staggered to minimise the number of pupils leaving at any one time. Classes shall only use their designated entrance and exit doors. Hand sanitisers are to be used on exiting the building. Any used personal protection equipment to be disposed of in sealed bins provided.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT**

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment. Bunscoil na Toirbhirte has completed a risk assessment document to identify the control measures required to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 in school settings.

Schools should also review their 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 should also be documented and incorporated into the school safety statement.

**CIRCULATION WITHIN THE SCHOOL**

Circulation within the school carries certain risk in terms of COVID-19. The following control measures will be put in place:

* **Sanitising Points**

In addition to sanitising points at the entrances and exits, there are sanitising points in all classrooms. Signage showing correct hand sanitising techniques to be at each station.

An appointed person will be responsible for the maintenance of sanitising points.

* **General Circulation**

General circulation within the school shall be kept to a minimum with classes entering and exiting through their designated door. Those moving through the school shall adhere to a one-way system where possible. Wall and floor signage to be in place to indicate the direction and routes of travel.

Exceptions to the one-way system are to be made for those with reduced mobility. In such cases, the individual with reduced mobility is to have right of way.

Movement between the main school building and the lower school will be restricted where possible.

Inter-class activities shall be restricted until further notice.

* **Floor Layout of Classrooms**

All classrooms shall be laid out to achieve maximum physical distancing. Tables shall be arranged in pods. Each pupil will have a designated seat and where possible, pupils shall remain within their seat and pod for all class activities.

Where possible pupils shall be at least 1m away from each other. The teacher’s desk shall be at least 1m and where possible 2m away from pupil desks.

All unnecessary furniture and equipment shall be removed from the classrooms and stored securely.

* **Classroom Hygiene**

Classrooms will be sanitised each day. Particular attention shall be paid to frequently touched surfaces. A documented record shall be maintained of this.

Where books and equipment are required to be distributed this should be carried out by a member of staff. Books and equipment shall not be shared between pods. Returned books and equipment shall either be sanitised or securely stored for 72 hours before reuse.

* **Staff Room**

Due to the restrictions in space in the staff room there is a risk of compromising physical distancing. To maximise capacity of canteens the following measures will be employed:

* Work and lunch breaks to be staggered.
* Removal of unnecessary furnishings.
* Staff are to bring their own coffee, tea and milk. The use of sugar bowls and coffee jars to be prohibited.
* Communal portable electrical equipment to be subject to a documented cleaning regime.
* Fridges to be emptied of everything by the users and sanitised at the end of each day.
* Frequently touched surfaces to be sanitised between shifts and at the end of the day.
* Staff to use their own cutlery and crockery which they shall be responsible for washing and storing in their own rooms.
* **First Aid**

Occupational first aiders may be at risk when treating a patient. Where close contact with a person who may require some level of first aid is avoidable, do so. Where this is not possible the following measures will be in place:

* PPE to be worn by all First Aid Responders when responding to first aid incidents where close contact cannot be avoided. The following PPE must be available for responding to first aid incidents:
	+ - Disposable gloves (nitrile/latex)
		- FFP3 or FFp2 Face masks

Following treatment, PPE and any waste to be disposed of appropriately.

* Patients to be treated according to Clinical Practice Guidelines, however if a suspected COVID-19 case, such patients to have a surgical facemask applied during contact time to limit the spread through droplet dispersion.
* Patients in cardiac arrest to have compression only CPR applied.
* **Welfare Facilities**

Welfare facilities will have physical distancing and hand washing technique signage put in place and are to be regularly maintained to ensure hot water and soap at all times. A documented record of maintenance checks to be kept by an appointed person.

* **Bins and Disposal**

PPE and tissues must be disposed of immediately. An appointed person to be made responsible for the disposal of such waste.

General waste and recycling bins to be emptied daily. Bin points to be monitored to ensure waste does not build up in these areas.

* **Printers, Photocopiers and Other Devices**

Communal devices are a possible point of congregation and also a frequent touch point. Positioning of communal devices to be reviewed to ensure that physical distancing is not compromised by those using them.

Frequent touch points on communal devices to be regularly sanitised. Individuals should practice hand sanitising after using a communal device.

**Access to School and Contact Log**

Access to the school building will be in line with agreed school procedures.

Arrangements for necessary visitors such as contractors and parents with be restricted to essential purposes and limited to those who have obtained prior approval from the principal. The Department of Education Inspectorate may also need to visit schools and centres for education to support them as appropriate in the implementation of public health advice relating to creating a safe learning and working environment for all.

• **Visitors**

A restriction on visitors to the school shall be put in place. Where critical visitors are required to attend, a controlled access process to be in place, including adherence to sanitisation processes and full personal contact details to be collected to assist with contact tracing. Visitors must complete a declaration form prior to entering to ascertain if they have any COVID-19 symptoms or if they have been abroad in the last 14 days. It is preferable that the declaration is completed before arriving onsite and submitted electronically.

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 should be maintained. The school should maintain a log of staff and pupil contacts.

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

Schools are reminded that all school records and data must be maintained and processed in compliance with the GDPR and the Data Protection Acts. The responsibility for compliance with the legislation rests with each school (or ETB) in their role as data controller.

**GENERAL MEASURES**

* **Hand Washing/ Sanitising**

All individuals are to wash their hands regularly and thoroughly and sufficient facilities are provided and maintained in each classroom to allow this to happen.

Hands to be washed/sanatised:

* + after coughing or sneezing
	+ before and after preparing food or eating
	+ before and after being on public transport if it must be used
	+ before and after being in a crowded area
	+ when arriving and leaving buildings
	+ if hands are dirty
	+ after toilet use

It is important to follow good practices for hand washing which include using soap and water and washing for over 20 seconds. Regular hand washing with soap and water is effective for the removal of COVID-19. Between washing, use of hand sanitisers (70% alcohol base) is recommended.

* **Physical Distancing**

Physical distancing shall be used to increase separation and decrease interaction between individuals.

It is recognised that physical distancing can be usefully applied in primary and special school settings allowing for some flexibility when needed. It must be applied in a practical way to recognise that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on this issue. Physical distancing will look different across the various ages and stages of learning.

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

The following measures shall be employed to achieve maximum physical distancing:

* + - Staggered starting times
		- Designated class entrance and exit doors
		- Reconfiguration of classrooms
		- Pods to be established within classes
		- No inter-class activities or inter-class mixing
		- Separation of classes within the playground
		- Social physical contact (hand to hand greeting, hugs) to be discouraged
		- Restrictions in circulation within the school
		- Restriction on visitors to the school.
* **Ventilation**

The Department has published guidance setting out the practical steps for good ventilation in accordance with public health advice ‘Practical Steps for the Deployment of Good Ventilation Practices in Schools’. The guidance provides that good ventilation can be achieved in classrooms without causing discomfort, particularly during cold weather.

In Bunscoil na Toirbhirte windows will be open as fully as possible when classrooms are not in use (e.g. during break-times or lunch-times (assuming not in use) and also at the end of each school day) and partially open when classrooms are in use.

* **Cough Etiquette/Respiratory Hygiene**

It is recommended that individuals cough/sneeze into a tissue or their elbow. Tissues are to be disposed of in bins.

* **Cleaning**

Cleaning processes are to be augmented and documented to ensure that all frequently touched objects and surfaces are regularly cleaned and sanitised. Cleaning rotas to be amended to reflect this.

These include:

* Taps and washing facilities
* Toilet flush and seats
* Door handles and push plates
* Handrails on staircases and corridors
* Lift calls and controls
* Machinery, equipment controls, keypads
* Food preparation and eating surfaces
* Communications equipment
* Keyboards, photocopiers and other office equipment
* Rubbish collection and storage points should be increased and emptied regularly throughout and at the end of each day

Staff shall be provided with cleaning material so that they can clean their own desk, desks/chairs in their classroom, contact surfaces and their immediate workspace. Staff shall be 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).

* **Record Keeping**

A contact log for all staff and visitors is to be maintained. The objective of the contact log is that there would be zero instances of “direct contact” for each day spent in the school This information to be stored securely, maintained centrally and readily available upon request. Such information may be requested by the HSE to assist with contact tracing.

* + “Direct contact” is defined as person-to-person contact or spray of droplets during coughing and sneezing.
	+ “Close contact” is defined as having been within 2m for more than 15 minutes accumulative in any 1 day.

*Source: NSAI COVID-19 Workplace Protection and Improvement Guide*

* **Training**

Staff to receive instruction and training on any new procedures or duties. Training to be online or remote access where possible.

* **Communication**

Aladdin will be used as the main source of communication to provide up-to-date reliable information to staff and our families.

Information will also be provided on a regular basis through the school website and social media.

* **Travel**

Staff and pupils returning to the island of Ireland are to refer to national advice issued by the HSE/Department of Foreign Affairs. Staff and families must inform the school of any overseas travel prior since the 12th of August 2020.

**Infection Prevention Control Measures**

Staff and pupils will self-isolate or restrict their movements at home if they display any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 and contact their family doctor to arrange a test. Staff and pupils to are asked to cooperate with any public health officials and the school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice in the event of a case or outbreak in the school.

School staff are asked to undergo any COVID-19 testing that may be required in their school as part of

mass or serial testing as advised by Public Health.

School staff are encouraged to download the HSE COVID-19 tracker app to

assist Public Health for contract tracing purposes both in and out of the school

setting.

Staff and pupils must not to return to or attend school in the event of the

following:

* if they are identified by the HSE as a close contact of a confirmed case of

COVID-19

* if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus
* If they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff are advised

to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.

**PPE**

Face coverings are recommended for all staff and visitors entering the school grounds. All staff will be provided with a face mask and a visor on their first day of school.

It is a requirement for face coverings to be worn by staff members where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres from other staff, parents, essential visitors or pupils.

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 children with medical needs in the school environment they should apply standard precautions as per usual practice.

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

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

• Primary school children

• Any person with difficulty breathing

• Any person who is unconscious or incapacitated

• Any person who is unable to remove the face-covering without assistance

• Any person who has special needs and who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the face covering, for example persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, sensory concerns or tactile sensitivity.

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 may wish to utilise their own face covering on a day-to-day basis, Bunscoil na Toirbhirte has an available a stock of additional disposable EU Standard EN 14683 face masks available for staff in case a back-up face covering is needed throughout the day or where required on an ongoing basis.

EU Standard EN 14683 face masks are available to staff that need to need to be in close and continued proximity with pupils with intimate care needs.

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

* **Gloves**

The use of disposable gloves in the school by pupils 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 also be appropriate 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.

**IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CERTAIN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

* **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.

* **Toys**

All toys should be cleaned on a regular basis for example weekly. This will remove dust and dirt that can harbour germs.

Toys that are visibly dirty or contaminated with blood or bodily fluids should be taken out of use immediately for cleaning or disposal.

If cloth or soft toys are used they should be machine washable. Jigsaws, puzzles and toys that young pupils to those with special educational needs may be inclined to put into their mouths should be capable of being washed and disinfected.

All play 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 toys and equipment should be stored in a clean container or clean cupboard. The manufacturer’s instructions should always be followed.

At this time soft modelling materials and play dough where used should be for individual use only.

Cleaning Procedure for Toys

• Wash the toy in warm soapy water, using a brush to get into crevices.

• Rinse the toy in clean water.

• Thoroughly dry the toy.

• Some hard plastic toys may be suitable for cleaning in the dishwasher.

• Toys that cannot be immersed in water that is electronic or wind up should be wiped with a damp cloth and dried.

• In some situations toys/equipment may need to be disinfected following cleaning for example: toys/equipment that pupils place in their mouths. Toys/equipment that have been soiled with blood or body fluids or toys where a case of COVID-19 has been identified.

• If disinfection is required: A chlorine releasing disinfectant should be used diluted to a concentration of 1,000ppm available chlorine. The item should be rinsed and dried thoroughly.

**Art**

Where possible pupils should be encouraged to have their own individual art and equipment supplies.

**Electronics**

Shared electronic devices such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards will be cleaned between use.

**Musical Equipment/Instruments**

 To the greatest extent possible, instruments will not be shared between pupils and if sharing is required, the instruments should be cleaned between uses.

**Library Policy**

Where practical pupils 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. Pupils should be encouraged to perform hand hygiene after using any shared item.

**Sports Equipment**

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

**Dealing with a Suspected COVID-19 Case in the School**

If a member of staff or a pupil becomes unwell with symptoms such as a high temperature (38°C or above), cough, shortness of breath, breathing difficulties or loss or change to sense of smell or taste the following actions must be followed:

1. **Remove the individual to an area at least 2 metres away from other people**

A designated room with a closed door shall be assigned for isolation purposes. An isolation route to the designated room will be in place. The route will be easily accessible and as far as is reasonable and practicable will be accessible by people with disabilities. Where possible the designated room will have an opening window to ensure adequate ventilation.

1. **Contact their GP or the HSE**

In the case of a pupil the parent or guardian is the first point of contact. The COVID-19 Response Team should initially assess whether the unwell individual can immediately be directed to go home, call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home. Where that is not possible, the unwell individual should remain in the isolation area and in the case of a staff member or visitor, call their doctor or the HSE (1850 24 1850), outlining their current symptoms.

The unwell person should not go to a doctor/GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital.

1. **Take precautions to minimise exposure to others**

Whilst the unwell individual waits for advice, they should remain at least 2 metres from others and avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. In the case of an adult, the individual should cover their mouth and nose with a surgical mask to be worn if in a room with other people or while exiting the premises.

Where necessary the COVID-19 Response Team will notify management and arrange transport home or hospital for medical assessment. Public transport of any kind will not be used.

1. **Wait for feedback from GP or HSE before making any decisions on site operations**

Closure of the school is not recommended. In the event of diagnosis for COVID-19, the management team will be contacted by the HSE to discuss the case, to identify persons who have been in contact with them and to advise on any actions or precautions that should be taken.

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

The room should be cleaned (fogged) as soon as practicably possible. Once the room is vacated the room should not be reused until the room has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry.

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

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 like a canteen, play area or if they used the toilet or bathroom facilities, then the areas should be cleaned with household detergent followed by a disinfectant (as outlined in the HPSC interim health advice) as soon as is practically possible.

* **Confirmed COVID-19 Cases in the School**

Staff and pupils who have not had close contact with the original confirmed case do not need to take any precautions and can continue to attend work. Those in contact with confirmed cases may be asked to:

* Self-isolate/stay at home for 14 days from the last time they had contact with the confirmed case.
* Cooperate with representatives from the HSE, who will follow-up.
* Immediately phone their doctor or the HSE (1850 24 1850) if they develop symptoms.
* Be tested for COVID-19 if they become unwell with a cough, fever (high temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or above, or chills) or experience difficulty in breathing. If the tested individual becomes unwell at any time within their 14-day observation period and they test positive for COVID-19 they will become a confirmed case.

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

For children with special educational needs (SEN) maintaining physical distancing in many instances will not be practical or appropriate to implement. The focus should 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.

Staff should not to attend work if they develop signs or symptoms of respiratory illness.

* **Hand hygiene**

Children 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.

**Staff Duties**

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 School COVID-19 Response Plan and the control measures outlined.

• Complete the RTW form before they return to work.

• Must 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.

• Must complete COVID-19 Induction Training and any other training required prior to their return to school.

• Must be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices.

• Coordinate and work with their colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained.

• Make themselves 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.

Staff must not to return to or attend school in the event of the following:

* if they are identified as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19
* if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus
* If they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.
* If they develop any symptoms of COVID-19 whilst within the school facility, they should adhere to the procedure outlined above.

**Staff must:**

• Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.

• Cooperate with any public health personnel and their school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice given in the event of a case or outbreak in their school

• Undergo any COVID-19 testing that may be required as part of mass or serial testing as advised by Public Health

**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.

**Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme**

The Department 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’.

The EAS is a self-referral service where employees have access to 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. The service is also available via SMS, WhatsApp, e-mail, live chat and call back request. All points of contact for the service are qualified, accredited and experienced mental health professionals.

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 is available which offers access to podcasts, blogs, live chats and videos on topics around wellbeing and mental health, family life, exercise and nutrition. E-Learning programmes across mental health, sleep and a range of wellbeing topics are 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. A series of weekly webinars and live talks to promote staff wellbeing in schools is current available on the wellbeing portal.

****

**COVID-19 Screening Form- Appendix 1**

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: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Question** | **Yes** | **No** |
| 1. Do you have symptoms of cough, fever, high temperature, difficulty breathing, loss or change in your sense of smell or taste now or in the past 14 days?
 |  |  |
| 1. Have you been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection in the last 14 days?
 |  |  |
| 1. Are you awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test?
 |  |  |
| 1. In the past 14 days, have you been in contact with a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19?
 |  |  |
| 1. Have you been advised by a doctor to self-isolate at this time?
 |  |  |
| 1. Have you been advised to restrict your movements at this time?
 |  |  |
| 1. Have you been advised to cocoon at this time? Note: if you’re at very high risk (extremely vulnerable) from COVID-19 you may be advised to cocoon.
 |  |  |

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 2 Lead Worker Representative – Primary and Special Schools**

The Work Safely Protocol is designed to support employers and workers to put infection control measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 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. The operation of these arrangements will be kept under review by the parties.

This document should be read in conjunction with:

• The Work Safely Protocol.

• the Guidance and FAQs for Public Service Employers during COVID-19;

• COVID-19 Response Plan for Primary and Special 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 infection prevention control measures lies primarily 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 pupils. Adherence to the Work Safely Protocol will only be achieved if everyone has a shared responsibility 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

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 Work Safely Protocol and current public health advice;

• In conjunction with school management, monitor adherence to infection prevention control 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.

3. 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

• 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. Lead Worker Representative

Every school will appoint one Lead Worker Representative.

5. Deputy Lead Worker Representative/ Assistant Lead Worker Representative

In schools with less than 30 staff, a Deputy Lead Worker Representative will be appointed in addition to the LWR. The role of the Deputy LWR will be to deputise as LWR where the LWR is absent.

In schools with 30 or more staff and in all Special schools, an Assistant Lead Worker Representative will be appointed in addition to the LWR. The role of the Assistant LWR will be to:

• assist the LWR in their duties as set out above; and

• deputise as LWR where the LWR is absent

6. Selection of Lead Worker Representative/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR

The school staff are entitled to select staff members for the LWR, Deputy LWR and Assistant LWR positions as appropriate. The LWR/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR 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. In this regard, if a teacher is selected for the role of LWR, then the Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR should be selected from the non-teaching staff where feasible and vice versa.

The process for the selection and appointment of the LWR/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR as appropriate should be arrived at by consultation and consensus at school level, through the seeking of volunteers to act in that capacity. Where there is more than one volunteer, all school staff should vote to select the LWR/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR.

The LWR/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR will, following selection by the school staff, be formally appointed by the employer. LWR/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR will be required to confirm, prior to taking up the role, that they have completed the provided training and that they are fully aware of the requirements of the role.

7. Supports for the Lead Worker Representative/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR

The LWR/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR shall be entitled to:

• Receive information and training in respect of their role;

• 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;

Where the LWR/ Assistant LWR is a teacher (including a postholder), the 10 Croke Park hours which can currently be used for planning on other than a whole school basis will be utilised by the LWR and Assistant LWR to carry out their duties in that role.

Where the LWR/ Assistant LWR is an SNA, 10 of the “72 hours” will be utilised by the LWR and Assistant LWR to carry out their duties in that role.

Where the LWR/ Assistant 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.

8. Procedure for dealing with issues that arise

Where an issue of 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. Staff should be informed of the outcome.

If agreement cannot be reached, the LWR may notify the Board of Management (Chairperson of the BoM 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. Staff should be informed of the outcome.

Glossary of Terms

• COVID-19 Response Plan: plan designed to support the staff and BOM/ ETB in putting infection prevention control 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 Work Safely Protocol, Department of Education and public health guidance to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in the school environment. COVID-19 Response Plans for Primary and Special 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.

• Work Safely Protocol: national protocol designed to support employers and workers to put measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 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.

**Appendix 3 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 before they return to the workplace? (Template attached)

11. Have you request confirmation that the details in the Return to Work Form remain unchanged following periods of closure such as school holidays.

12. 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?

13. Have you advised staff and pupils they must stay at home if sick or if they have any symptoms of COVID-19?

14. Have you advised staff and pupils not to return to or attend school if they are identified by the HSE as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 or if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus.

15. Have you advised staff and pupils not to return or attend school if they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.

16. 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?

17. Have you advised staff and pupils to cooperate with any public health officials and the school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice in the event of a case or outbreak in the school;

18. Have you advised staff of the availability of the supports of the occupational health and wellbeing programme through Spectrum Life?

19. 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

20. Have you advised staff to view the Department of Education’s training materials which are available online?

21. 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?

22. Have first aiders, if available, been given updated training on infection prevention and control re: hand hygiene and use of PPE as appropriate?

Buildings / Equipment

23. If you have mechanical ventilation does it need cleaning or maintenance before the school reopens after periods of closure?

24. Does your water system need flushing at outlets following low usage to prevent Legionnaire’s Disease?

25. Have you visually checked, or had someone check, all equipment in the school for signs of deterioration or damage before being used again?

26. Have you arranged for the school, including all equipment, desks, benches, doors and frequent touched surfaces points, to be cleaned once a day

Infection Prevention Control Measures in place

Hand / respiratory hygiene

27. Have you accessed supplies of hand sanitisers and any necessary PPE equipment in line with the interim HPSC health guidance from the national framework provided by the Department?

28. 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?

29. Have arrangements been made for staff and pupils to have regular access to hand-washing/hand sanitising facilities as appropriate?

30. 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?

31. Have you made arrangements to ensure hand hygiene facilities are regularly checked and well-stocked?

32. Does the alcohol-based hand sanitiser have at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol as the active ingredient?

33. Have you informed staff about the importance of hand washing?

34. 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?

35. Have you shown staff and pupils how to use hand sanitiser correctly and where hand-sanitising stations are located?

36. Have you displayed posters on how to wash hands correctly in appropriate locations?

37. 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

- when entering and exiting vehicles

- after touching potentially contaminated surfaces

- if in contact with someone displaying any COVID-19 symptoms

38. 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:

39. Have you identified all available school space to be used to maximise physical distancing?

40. 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?

41. Have you arranged to revise the layout of the rooms and furniture as per the Department guidelines if necessary?

42. Have you arranged in each room that the teacher’s desk should be at least 1m and where possible 2m away from pupil desks?

43. Have you arranged in each room that pupils would be at least 1m away from each other?

44. Have you allocated work stations consistently to the same staff and children rather than having spaces that are shared?

45. 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?

46. 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?

47. 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?

48. Have you arranged Pod sizes to be as small as it is likely to be reasonably practical in the specific classroom context?

49. 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?

50. Have you arranged where possible that different class bubbles to have separate breaks and meal times or separate areas at break or meal times?

51. Have you made arrangements to limit interaction on arrival and departure from school and in other shared areas?

52. Have you encouraged walking or cycling to school as much as possible?

53. Have you made arrangements, in so far as practicable, to open additional access points to school to reduce congestion?

54. Can you provide a one system for entering and exiting the school, where practical?

55. Have you arranged for staff meetings to be held remotely or in small groups or in large spaces to facilitate physical distancing?

56. Have you a system to regularly remind staff and pupils to maintain physical distancing

57. Have you advised staff not to shake hands and to avoid any physical contact?

58. Have you advised staff of the Department’s guidance to achieve good ventilation

59. Have you checked any mechanical ventilation systems to ensure an adequate supply of fresh air is used

Visitors to Schools

60. 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?

61. Are there arrangements in place to inform essential visitors to the school of the measures to help prevent the spread of infection?

62. 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 4 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 nominated as the designated contact person 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?

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 the 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?).

**Appendix 5 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 6 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?

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
* Cleaning of frequently touched surfaces such as vending machines, coffee machines and door handles
* 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 disposing personal waste such as cleaning cloths and used wipes in a rubbish bag? The Protocol advises that personal waste such as cleaning waste, tissues etc. 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?