**Seir Kieran’s National School Reopening Plan**

Parent & Staff Information



**School Reopening – Monday 30th August 2021**

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13. **Introduction:**  **What is a COVID-19 Response Plan?**

The COVID-19 Response Plan of Seir Kieran’s NS is designed to support the staff and Board of Management (BOM) in putting measures in place that aim to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in our school environment.

The COVID-19 Response Plan details the policies and practices necessary for our 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 our school 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 this 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.*

1. **Aims:**

Through the implementation of the practices and procedures as outlined in this policy our school community aims to**:**

* Do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into our school.
* Reduce the likelihood of the spread of Covid-19, insofar as possible, within our school if introduced.
* Detail for all members of our school community how our school will reopen for all students from **Monday, 30th of August** and what the operation of our school will look like, to be sustainable in a COVID-19 context.
* Balance the need for a practical and sensible level of caution with the need to provide a supportive environment for teaching and learning.

1. **COVID-19 Policy Statement:**

**COVID-19 Policy Statement**

Seir Kieran’s NS 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**, **Mrs Annette Williams,** who will be supported in line with the agreement between the Department and education partners. The **Deputy Lead Worker Representative** is **Mrs Geraldine Kealy**

Signed on behalf of the Board of Management by

Chairperson of the Board of Management;

John Kirwan Date; 27th of August 2021

1. **Reviewing the Safe Operation of Seir Kieran’s NS**

The BOM aims to facilitate the continuation of school based teaching and learning and a safe working environment for staff. The operation of our school will be done safely and in strict adherence to the public health advice and any guidance issued by the Department of Education.

Seir Kieran’s NS School will review their current processes to ensure that they include the following:

* Arrangements to keep up to date with public health advice, changes to 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 a Lead Worker representative (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 if necessary 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);
  + Have bin collections and other essential services resumed.

**4.1 Induction Training (to be completed by new staff)**

All new staff will undertake and complete Covid-19 Induction Training prior to returning to the school building. The aim of such training is 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.

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

* A RTW form will be completed and returned to the school before returning to work. Staff are requested (verbally or in writing) to confirm that the details in the pre-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 new 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.
* 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.

**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 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.

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 be achieved by everyone taking 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.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Name of lead worker representative:*** | ***Contact details:*** |
| Mrs. Annette Williams | O5791 31158 |

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.

**4.4 Signage**

Seir Kieran’s NS has displayed signage outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene.

<https://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Announcements/information-for-schools-preschools-and-third-level-institutions-on-the-coronavirus.html#1>

Our school has displayed the posters in prominent areas such as offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilets.

**4.5 Making Changes to School Layout**

Maintaining physical distancing in our school environment is recommended as one of the key infection prevention control measures to minimise the risk of the introduction and spread of COVID-19. Information on how physical distancing can be used in the school environment is found at ***Section 5.4***.

**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 our school is attached at ***Appendix 4.***

Seir Kieran’s NS has also reviewed our 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 are also documented and incorporated into our school safety statement.

***First Aid/Emergency Procedure***

The standard First Aid/emergency procedure shall continue to apply in schools. In an emergency or in case of a serious incident, our school 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 will be in line with agreed school procedures.

Arrangements for necessary visitors such as contractors and parents will 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.

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. Our school also maintains a log of staff and pupil contacts.

**5. Infection Prevention 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 our school. If infection is not introduced it cannot be spread. The risk of spreading the infection once introduced exists in all interpersonal interactions; pupil-pupil, teacher-teacher and teacher- pupil 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.

The best ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in a workplace or any setting is to practice physical distancing, adopt proper hand hygiene, follow respiratory etiquette and increase ventilation.

***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 Schools:**

Promote awareness of COVID-19 symptoms (*details at Section 5.1*);

* Advise staff and pupils that have symptoms not to attend school, to phone their doctor and to follow HSE guidance on self-isolation;
* Advise staff and pupils to 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
* Advise staff and pupils, to follow the HSE advice if they are a close contact of a suspected/ confirmed case of Covid-19.
* If they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff and pupils are advised to consult and follow latest Government advices in relation to foreign travel.
* Advise staff and pupils that develop symptoms at school to bring this to the attention of the Principal promptly;
* Ensure that staff and pupils know the protocol for managing a suspected case of COVID-19 in school *(details at Section 8);*
* Advise 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;
* Everyone entering the school building needs to perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser;
* Visitors to the school during the day shouldbe by prior arrangement and should be received at a specific contact point;
* Physical distancing (of 2m) should be maintained between staff and visitors where possible.
  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

Infection with the virus that causes COVID-19 can cause illness, ranging from mild to severe, and, in some cases, can be fatal. It can take up to 14 days for symptoms to show. They can be similar to symptoms of [cold](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/common-cold.html) and [flu](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/flu/flu-symptoms-and-diagnosis.html).

**Common symptoms of coronavirus include:**

* a fever (high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above).
* a new cough - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry.
* shortness of breath or breathing difficulties.
* loss or change in your sense of smell or taste – this means you’ve noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

If you have any common symptoms of COVID-19 (coronavirus), [self-isolate](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/self-isolation/how-to-self-isolate.html) (stay in your room) and phone your family doctor straight away to see if you need [a free COVID-19 test](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/testing/how-to-get-tested.html).

Getting an early diagnosis means, you can get the help you need and take steps to avoid spreading the virus, if you have it.

**COVID-19 Tracker App**

COVID Tracker app is a free and easy-to-use mobile phone app that will:

* alert you if you have been in [close contact](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/close-contact-and-casual-contact.html) with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 (coronavirus)
* keep other app users safe by alerting them if you test positive for COVID-19
* give you advice on what to do if you have symptoms

You can download the free app from [Apple's AppStore](https://apps.apple.com/ie/app/covid-tracker-ireland/id1505596721) or the [GooglePlay store](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.covidtracker.hse)

Employers and workers must keep themselves up to date on Public Health information as this can be updated on a regular basis. Public Health information on [close contacts, casual contacts and testing](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/close-contact-and-casual-contact.html) is available from the HSE website.

* 1. **Respiratory Hygiene**

Make sure you, and the people around you, 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.

* 1. **Hand Hygiene**

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

Our School promotes good hygiene and displays posters throughout the school on how to wash your hands. Follow the HSE guidelines on handwashing:

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

* Hand hygiene can be achieved by hand washing or use of a hand sanitiser (when hands look clean).
* Use of hand hygiene facilities including wash hand basins are managed so as to avoid congregation of pupils and staff waiting to use wash hand basins and hand sanitisers.
* All pupils have access to hand washing facilities after activities that are likely to soil hands, for example playing outside or certain sporting activities as hand sanitiser does not work on dirty hands.
* Hand sanitiser dispensers can be deployed more readily at exit and entry points of schools and classrooms and care should be taken to clean up any hand sanitiser spills to prevent risks of falls.
* Warm water is preferable to hot or cold water for hand washing.
* Wash hand basins, running water, liquid soap and hand drying facilities are provided in all toilets, kitchens and any food preparation areas.
* Hand washing facilities are maintained in good condition and supplies of soap and towels should be topped up regularly to encourage everyone to use them.
* Posters displaying hand washing techniques and promoting hand washing should are 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**

When pupils and staff **MUST** perform hand hygiene:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Time/Event:** | **Action to be taken** |
| * On arrival at school; | * Use hand sanitizer at stations provided |
| * Before eating or drinking in class; | * Use hand sanitizer at stations provided |
| * After using the toilet; | * Wash hands at sink in toilet |
| * After playing outdoors; | * Wash hands in toilets or sinks in classrooms if hands are visibly dirty. Otherwise use hand sanitizer at stations provided |
| * When their hands are physically dirty; | * Wash hands at sink in toilet or at classroom sink |
| * When they cough or sneeze. | * Wash hands at sink in toilet areas |

**5.4) Physical Distancing**

Physical distancing is 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. Care is taken in Seir Kieran’s NS to avoid generating tension or potential conflict and some flexibility in the implementation of measures may be required at times.

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.

* Our school community is committed to the two principles of physical distancing, namely, **increasing separation and decreasing interaction**, as a means of minimising the risk of the introduction of Covid-19 to our school.

**Increasing Separation**

To maintain physical distancing in the classroom Seir Kieran’s NS has:

* Reconfigured class spaces to maximise physical distancing
* Utilised and reconfigured all available space in the school in order to maximise physical distancing
* The teacher’s desk is at least 1m and where possible 2m away from pupil desks.

**Decreasing interaction**

In order to minimise contact between pupils, insofar as possible, the school will operate the following procedures for arrival, dismissal, movement through the school and break times.

The children and their teachers will work in Class Bubbles. A Class Bubble is a grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible. The aim of the system within the school is that class groupings mix only with their own class from arrival at school in the morning until the children go home at the end of the school day.

**Arrival & Collection Arrangements for Pupils**

In order to minimise contact between pupils, insofar as possible, the school will operate the following procedures for arrival, dismissal, movement through the school and break times.

**Arrival:**

* When all staff arrive on the school premises, they will hand sanitise on entry. All staff will have masks/visors made available to them and they wear a mask or visor when they are unable to maintain 2m distancing with others within the school building.
* The Principal/Deputy Principal will be at the school gates each morning from 8.45am to receive pupils. No parents will enter beyond the school gates.
* A teacher will be on supervision duties between the 3 classrooms when pupils enter. Pupils will go directly to their seating area within their own pods. Again as pupils enter their classrooms, they will fully hand sanitise.
* Classes will begin at 8.55am. Where pupils come late, they will have to buzz in at the reception area to gain entry. The school appreciates that on odd occasions this will happen due to things beyond the control of parents. The importance of punctuality will however be emphasised to all parents in the current context.

**Collection/Departing:**

* Collection of Infants:  Infants will be escorted to the school gates by teaching/SNA staff where parents/collectors can take their children. Those children who are using transport will be received by their bus escort at the school gates.

* Children from 1st to 6th Class; We will continue to operate the same system as last term. The children will come out in three groups. The first group will come out at 2.30pm, the second group two minutes later and the third group at 2.35pm. The groups will continue to operate as they did last year so if you are in the first group, please be in the car park at 2.30pm and if you are in the final group, you are time enough being in the car park at 2.35pm. As there are not enough car parking spaces in the car park for a full capacity of cars at the one time, people's cooperation with this simply allows all to depart safely. If your child is in first class and has siblings in older classes, he/she will be in the group which his/her siblings are currently in. If your child(ren) who are in first class. have no siblings in older classes, you or whoever is collecting your child(ren) can be in the car park at 2.30pm

**Parental responsibilities on arrival and collection:**

* **Parents/carers must arrive on time for dropping off and collecting their children.**
* Only parents or carers who are well and have no symptoms of COVID-19 or who have served the required quarantine time of 14 days where advised are allowed to drop off and collect children.
* Any parent who is in a high risk category should not drop off or collect children in order to protect themselves. (This of course is at the discretion of the individual parent/carer/grandparent’s discretion)
* Parents must not congregate in groups or stand around chatting.
* Under no circumstances are parents to linger outside in the car park after the child has been handed over but are to leave immediately.
* At arrival and departure times of children, social distancing is to be maintained by children and parents.
* Under no circumstances are parents and carers to gather in groups while waiting for the bell to sound
* Parents/visitors who enter the school grounds must wear a face covering

**Junior Infants to Second Class**

It is recognised that younger children are unlikely to maintain physical distancing indoors so there is no requirement for children from Junior Infants to Second Class to maintain a physical distance within their Class Bubble.

**Third Class to Sixth Class**

Children from Third Class to Sixth Class will be arranged in Pods within their Class Bubbles. As far as possible, each Pod will be at least 1 metre distance from the next Pod.All unnecessary furniture has been removed from these classrooms to create as much space as possible.

**Pods:** Class teachers will assign the pupils to the particular Pods having consulted with the previous class teacher. These Pods can be changed at Christmas and Easter as there is a natural break of 14 days.

**Team Teaching/Special Education Teachers/Special Needs Assistants**

Staff members (particularly Support Teachers) can rotate between areas/classes but this will be minimized where possible. When rotation occurs, agreed sanitising routines will be observed.

In keeping with our Special Education policy, support will be provided by a blended approach of in-class support and withdrawal. The provision of support will be organised to ensure our support teachers will work as far as possible, within the confines of a bubble (class)

* Where a support teacher is working alongside a class teacher in a classroom, both teachers must be mindful of maintaining social distance from one another.
* The tables and chairs in SET rooms will be wiped clean in between different pupils or small groups attending.

**Corridors**

* Adults briefly passing each other in a hall is very unlikely to contribute significantly to the spread of infection if people do not have physical contact and avoid informal group discussions.
* We will observe our usual practice of keeping to the **right** when on the corridors.

**Additional Measures to Limit Interactions**

* Children will go straight to their classrooms from the yard and will not congregate in the corridors or hallways.
* While we will all be delighted to see each other again, hand shaking and hugging will not be allowed.

**Ventilation :** To ensure that classrooms are well ventilated, windows will be kept open as often as possible, and will be opened while children are taking breaks in the playground.

**Signage:** Three social distancing signs have been erected in the grounds, at the main gate and at the entrances to both buildings. We have also put social distancing signs on the corridors, floors and outside both offices and staffroom

**Packages delivered to school**: Only school related orders /packages will be allowed to be delivered to the school.

**Lunches**

* Parents must make sure that children bring their lunches to school to avoid adults having to come to the school during the day. Please remind your children not to share their food or drinks with other children.
* Please make sure your child is self-sufficient i.e. they can open/peel any lunch/drink you pack for them. Please pay particular attention to any drinks that require a straw.
* Please make sure they have enough drinks to last them throughout the day as we will not be in a position to refill drinks bottles.
* Children will eat their lunches at their desks. No food will be allowed onto the yard.

**Break times:**

* At 10.50am children will take their lunches out and have some lunch. This time (10.50am – 11am) will allow the children to use the bathroom facilities in an orderly fashion. Class teachers will then bring their class grouping (bubble) to their designated area on the yard. The teacher on duty will then conduct yard supervision. At 11.15am all class teachers will return to the yard to escort their pupils, in a safe manner, bringing them directly back to their classrooms.
* When children return to the classroom, they will hand sanitise on entry. Teachers will then inspect the hands of all pupils. Where hands are visibly dirty, these children will hand wash and then re-hand sanitise.
* Lessons will operate between 11.20am and 12.20pm as per normal. At 12.20pm the bell will ring again and children will again take out their lunches. The same practices as are in operation at break time, will operate at lunch time and after lunch time.

**Books, Copies, Pencils, Hand sanitisers etc.**

* Children should use their own books, pens, pencils, etc. and must not be shared with other pupils.
* Children are asked to have a packet of tissues in their pencil case in case they need a tissue during class.

**Uniforms/Tracksuits**

There is no guidance or advice to say that school uniforms or tracksuits should be washed every day and this is not practical for most families. However children’s uniforms must be clean and washed regularly as a child may have coughed or sneezed into their sleeve as per coughing protocols.

As a school we strongly advise that children should wear their school uniforms **only for school related activities.**  Uniforms or tracksuits should be taken off straight after the child arrives home from school for the day. They should not be worn in after-school facilities, shops, during after-school activities, etc.

**Office**

* We request that parents use epayments as much as possible to minimise the amount of cash that needs to be handled. Parents/Guardians are asked to co-operate in helping to keep school staff safe by arranging for contactless payments through the school office.
* All visitors to the school must fill in a Contact Tracing Log
* As far as possible, staff members should minimise their entry to the office area

**Photocopying**.

Any staff member who uses the photocopier must clean it down after use with the wipes provided.

**ICT**

Devices must be cleaned after use and before they are returned for charging

**Visiting Teachers/Coaches** A copy of the Covid-19 Response Plan will be provided to each teacher and coach and the principal will go through all the main points of the plan and make the coach/teacher fully aware of all Covid 19 guidelines which are operating in the school.

**Substitute Teachers and SNAs**

The sequence for covering all teacher absences will be in accordance with DES circular 0045/2020**.** A copy of the Covid-19 Response Plan will be provided to each substitute teacher/SNA. Substitutes will be required to complete a Return to the Workplace form before they enter a classroom and will be asked to confirm that they have engaged in the online Induction training.

**Physical Education and P.E. Equipment**

Physical Education lessons will take place outside when the weather allows. Teachers will organise lessons that require very little if any equipment. Staff members and pupils will be encouraged to take additional breaks outside during the school day. While these breaks are taking place all windows in the classroom should be opened to allow for ventilation. All PE equipment if used must be sanitised after use.

**Wet Days:** teachers will provide activities for pupils to engage in during break times to encourage them to remain in their pods in the classroom.

**Toilets during break:** teachers will ensure the pupils go to the toilet before break time and before they go out onto the yard.

**Desks:** All desks must be left free of any books/ belongings/materials every evening to enable the cleaners to carry out a thorough cleaning.

**Staffroom**

* All staff members must maintain a physical distance of 2 metres when they are not engaged in teaching e.g. when they are using the staff room and arriving to work.
* Staff meetings will be held in the GP Room to allow for adequate social distancing.

**Teaching and Learning**

* Each child will be a different place in relation to his/her learning, and we wish to assure you that staff will take that into consideration when planning for Teaching and Learning during the 2021/2022 school year. We will abide by the motto **‘Slow down to catch up’** in order to go over aspects not covered in your child’s previous class.
* The Department of Education and Skills has published Curriculum guidelines for us, and we ask you to trust our experience and professional expertise as we work with all the children during the return to school.

**Incoming Junior Infants**. They will start at the normal time of 8:55 a.m. but finish at 12.00 noon for the first two weeks. From Monday 13th September onwards Junior Infants will go home at the normal time of 1.35 p.m.

**Other Parental Responsibilities:**

* Parents must ensure that all of the child’s equipment/books/copies are labelled with the child’s name as equipment/books cannot and will not be shared.
* Parents are to ensure that their child knows and uses the protocols around coughing/sneezing/use of tissues/hand sanitisers prior to returning to school.
* Parents must ensure that all **books/writing equipment/lunch boxes/water bottles** are sanitised using disinfectant/alcohol wipes before being placed in the child’s schoolbag.
* Water bottles are to be filled at home every morning.
* Lunches. Make sure your child can open /close their lunch box/drinks bottles. Regarding food please make sure they can open or peel any food that you send in. Please pay particular attention to yogurt cartons, oranges, drinks that needs straws etc. Juice boxes that require a straw are not recommended. As advised on booklists, children should have their own reusable drink bottle filled with water. Teachers will not be able to assist anymore in any of these activities. As we will not be in a position to refill water bottles please ensure your child has enough drinks for the day.
* Regarding clothing, please ensure your child can or teach your child to open/close their own coat and tie their own shoes***.***

**5.6. Use of PPE in School by all Staff**

* Medical Grade Masks – All school staff will use medical grade mask in the EN16483 category to ensure it is safe to be in close and continued proximity with pupils

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

***Choir/Music Performance***

For the time being there will be no choir performance/shows indoors.

***Sport Activities***

Our schools is bound by HPSC guidance on Return to Sport. Link to return to sport protocols is found here.

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

***Shared Equipment:***

* Toys

All toys will 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 are to be taken out of use immediately for cleaning or disposal.

The toys we use are ones that are easy to clean and disinfect (when necessary).

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 will be checked for signs of damage for example breaks or cracks. If they cannot be repaired or cleaned they will be discarded.

Clean toys and equipment are 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.

**Art –** Where possible pupils are encouraged to have their own individual art and equipment supplies.

**Electronics** – Shared electronic devices such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards are be cleaned between use by spraying a tissue & wiping the keyboard & screen. (It is important not to spray directly on to the device.

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

**Library Policy** – Where practical pupils generally have their own books. Textbooks that are shared are covered in a wipeable plastic covering that can be wiped with a suitable household cleaning agent between uses. Pupils are encouraged to perform hand hygiene after using any shared item.

**Shared Sports Equipment** – Minimise equipment sharing and clean shared equipment between uses by different people.

**7. Hygiene and Cleaning in Schools**

* Seir Kieran’s NS is cleaned at **least once per day**. Additional cleaning during this period is 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.
* Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day.
* There is regular collection of used waste disposal bags from offices and other areas within the school facility**.**
* A staff member is designated to clean an sanitise equipment, utensils in staff room after each break time.

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

* The room should be cleaned 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.
* Disinfection only works on things that are clean. When disinfection is required it is always as well as cleaning.
* Person assigned to cleaning should avoid touching their face while they are cleaning and should wear household gloves and a plastic apron.
* Clean the environment and furniture using disposable cleaning cloths and a household detergent followed by disinfection with a chlorine based product (household bleach).
* Pay special attention 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.

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

Staff or pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of COVID-19. The following outlines how a school should deal with a suspected case that may arise in a school setting.

A designated isolation area should be identified within the school building. The possibility of having more than one person displaying signs of COVID-19 should be considered and a contingency plan for dealing with additional cases put in place. The designated isolation area should be behind a closed door and away from other staff and pupils.

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

* If the person with the suspected case is a pupil, the parents/guardians should be contacted immediately;
* Isolate the person and have a procedure in place to accompany the individual to the designated isolation area via the isolation route, keeping at least 2m away from the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2m from the symptomatic person at all times;
* The isolation area does not have to be a room but if it is not a room it should be 2m away from others in the room;
* If it is not possible to maintain a distance of 2m, a staff member caring for a pupil should wear a face covering or mask. Gloves should not be used as the virus does not pass through skin;
* Provide a mask for the person presenting with symptoms. He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises;
* 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;
* Facilitate the person presenting with symptoms remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and facilitate them calling their doctor. The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. Advice should be given to the person presenting with symptoms 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, arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible and advise them to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used;
* If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a Covid-19 suspect;
* Carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery;
* Arrange for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved – (***details at Section 7***).

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 instructions of the HSE should be followed and staff and pupil confidentiality is essential at all times. School staff should be 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 (see section 5.1).

**9. Special Educational Needs**

**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.

Similarly staff should be aware of their responsibility 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.

***Equipment***

Some children 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.

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**

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.
* New staff 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.
* Follow the HSE guidance if they are identified as a close contact.
* 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.
* Keep informed of the updated advice of the publichealth 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

**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 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](https://www.education.ie/en/Education-Staff/Information/Occupational-Health-Strategy/) is in place as a supportive resource for individual staff members 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).

The EAS also provides advice and support to managers and delivers interventions to help them deal with health and wellbeing issues in the workplace.

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. Spectrum.Life also provides a series of webinars and presentations to promote wellbeing in schools.

**Wellbeing of the School Community**

We will work on the recommended five principles to support the wellbeing of all our pupils and staff. These are promoting:

*• A sense of safety*

*• A sense of calm*

*• A sense of belonging and connectedness to school*

*• A sense of self-efficacy and school-community efficacy*

*• A sense of hope*

Our usual practice is to provide support to pupils based on what is known as the Continuum of Support. This is a tiered system that provides Whole School and Classroom Support for all pupils, additional School Support for some pupils, and School Support plus extra targeted intervention for a few pupils with complex needs.

**Note:**

All Staff reviewed & updated this policy on 25th August 2021.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Seir Kieran’s

N.S. on the 27th of August.

Signed on behalf of the Board of Management by

John Kirwan Date:27th of August 2021

Chairperson of the BOM

**APPENDIX 1 COVID-19 Policy Statement**

Seir Kieran’s NS 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 and updated 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: John Kirwan Date: 27th of August 2021

**Appendix 2 - Return to Work Form**

This Return to Work Form must be completed by school staff in advance of returning to the workplace. If the answer is Yes to any of the below questions, you are advised to seek medical advice before returning to the workplace.

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

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

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Questions** | **YES** | **NO** |
| 1. | Do you have symptoms of cough, fever, high temperature (38 degrees C or above), difficulty breathing, loss or change in your sense of smell or taste 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. | Are you awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test? |  |  |
| 4. | In the past 14 days, have you been in contact with a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19? |  |  |
| 5. | Have you been advised to self-isolate at this time? |  |  |
| 6. | Have you been advised to restrict your movements at this time? |  |  |
| 7. | Have you been categorised as ‘Very High Risk’ or ‘High Risk’ by the Occupational Health Service (OHS) |  |  |

Please provide details below of any other circumstances relating to COVID-19, not included in the above, which may need to be considered to allow your safe return to work e.g. returning from travel abroad.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

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

\* If your situation changes after you complete and submit this Return to Work Form, please inform your employer.

\*\* Further information on people at very high risk (extremely vulnerable) or high risk from COVID-19

can be found at link: [https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/people-at-higher-risk.html.](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/covid19/people-at-higher-risk/overview/)

\*\*\* Details of current arrangements for travel overseas can be found set out at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/77952-government-advice-on-international-travel/>

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

**Appendix 3** **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](https://www.gov.ie/en/news/092fff-update-on-working-arrangements-and-leave-associated-with-covid-19-fo/);
* 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. 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**

Every school will appoint one Lead Worker Representative.

**6. 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

**7. 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.

**8. 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.

**9. 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 4 Risk Assessment**

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

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Hazards | Is the hazard present? Y/N | 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 completed |
| COVID-19 | N | Illness | H | School Covid19 Response Plan in place in line with Department of Education guidance and the Work Safely Protocol and public health advice |  | *Examples of Actions*  Follow public health guidance from HSE re hygiene and respiratory etiquette  Complete School COVID-19 Policy Statement  Return to Work Forms received and reviewed  Induction Training provided  Contact log in place  Complete checklists as required:  School Management  How to deal with a suspected case  Other school specific checklist | 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**

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

**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 DE~~S~~ 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**

1. 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)***
2. Have you request confirmation that the details in the Return to Work Form remain unchanged following periods of closure such as school holidays.
3. 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 DE agreed arrangements for management of those staff?
4. Have you advised staff and pupils they must stay at home if sick or if they have any [symptoms of COVID-19](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/symptoms.html)?
5. Have you advised staff and pupils to follow public health advice 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.
6. Have you advised staff and pupils consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.
7. 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?
8. 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;
9. Have you advised staff of the availability of the supports of the occupational health and wellbeing programme through Spectrum Life?
10. Has a lead worker representative been identified (in line with the process agreed with the DE 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**

1. Have you advised new staff to view the Department of Education’s training materials which are available online?
2. 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?
3. 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**

1. If you have mechanical ventilation does it need cleaning or maintenance before the school reopens after periods of closure?
2. Does your water system need flushing at outlets following low usage to prevent Legionnaire’s Disease?
3. Have you visually checked, or had someone check, all equipment in the school for signs of deterioration or damage before being used again?
4. 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**

1. 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?
2. 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?
3. Have arrangements been made for staff and pupils to have regular access to hand-washing/hand sanitising facilities as appropriate?
4. 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?
5. Have you made arrangements to ensure hand hygiene facilities are regularly checked and well-stocked?
6. Does the alcohol-based hand sanitiser have at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol as the active ingredient?
7. Have you informed staff about the importance of hand washing?
8. Have you arranged for new staff to view [how to wash their hands](https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html) (with soap and water for at least 20 seconds) and dry them correctly through the use of the HSE video resource?
9. Have you shown new staff and pupils how to use hand sanitiser correctly and where hand-sanitising stations are located?
10. Have you [displayed posters](https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/ee0781-covid-19-posters-for-public-use/) on how to wash hands correctly in appropriate locations?
11. 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

1. 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:**

1. Have you identified all available school space to be used to maximise physical distancing?
2. 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?
3. Have you arranged to revise the layout of the rooms and furniture as per the Department guidelines if necessary?
4. Have you arranged in each room that the teacher’s desk should be at least 1m and where possible 2m away from pupil desks?
5. Have you arranged in each room that pupils would be at least 1m away from each other?
6. Have you allocated work stations consistently to the same staff and children rather than having spaces that are shared?
7. 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?
8. 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?
9. 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?
10. Have you arranged Pod sizes to be as small as it is likely to be reasonably practical in the specific classroom context?
11. 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?
12. Have you arranged where possible that different class bubbles to have separate breaks and meal times or separate areas at break or meal times?
13. Have you made arrangements to limit interaction on arrival and departure from school and in other shared areas?
14. Have you encouraged walking or cycling to school as much as possible?
15. Have you made arrangements, in so far as practicable, to open additional access points to school to reduce congestion?
16. Can you provide a one system for entering and exiting the school, where practical?
17. Have you arranged for staff meetings to be held remotely or in small groups or in large spaces to facilitate physical distancing?
18. Have you a system to regularly remind staff and pupils to maintain physical distancing
19. Have you advised staff not to shake hands and to avoid any physical contact?
20. Have you advised staff of the Department’s guidance to achieve good ventilation
21. Have you checked any mechanical ventilation systems to ensure an adequate supply of fresh air is used

**Visitors to Schools**

1. 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?
2. Are there arrangements in place to inform essential visitors to the school of the measures to help prevent the spread of infection?
3. 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 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**

1. Are procedures in place to accompany the infected person to the isolation area, along the isolation route with physical distancing from them?
2. Are staff familiar with this procedure?
3. Have others been advised to maintain a distance of at least 2m from the affected person at all times?
4. 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**

1. Staff – have you established by asking them if the staff members feel well enough to travel home?
2. 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.
3. The affected person should be advised to avoid touching other people, surfaces and objects.
4. 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.
5. Has transport home or to an assessment centre been arranged if the affected person has been directed to go there by their GP?
6. Has the affected person been advised not to go to their GP’s surgery or any pharmacy or hospital?
7. Has the affected person been advised they must not use public transport?
8. Has the affected person been advised to continue wearing the face mask until the reach home?

**Follow up**

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

**Cleaning**

1. Have you taken the isolation area out-of-use until cleaned and disinfected?
2. Have you made arrangements to clean and disinfect any classroom space where the staff or pupils were located?
3. 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?
4. Have the cleaners been trained in dealing with contaminated areas and supplied with the appropriate PPE?*).*

**Appendix 8 Checklist Lead Worker Representative**

1. Have you agreed with your school to act as a Lead worker representative for your school?
2. Have you been provided with information and training in relation to the role of lead worker representative if you are new to the role?
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](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/symptoms.html)?
5. Do you know [how the virus is spread](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/how-coronavirus-is-spread.html)?
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 have been 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?
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?

1. Details of how to clean following a suspected case of COVID-19 are at ***Section 7 of the Plan above***
2. If disinfection of contaminated surfaces is required, is a system in place to do this following cleaning?
3. 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?
4. 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.*
5. 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?
6. 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?