

# Loreto Secondary School

## Covid-19 Response Plan



Revised March 2021

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# 1. Introduction

This *Covid-19 Response Plan* is designed to support the staff and Board of Management in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of Covid-19 in Loreto Secondary School.

The plan incorporates current advice about measures to reduce the spread of Covid-19 in the community issued by the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE). The Board of Management want to ensure that any proposals and recommendations in relation to the resumption of teaching and the reopening of facilities comply with best guidance as provided by the Governments and the national health agency. As the advice issued by NPHE continues to evolve, this protocol and the measures management and staff need to address may also change.

This document aims to provide details of:

- ✓ Return to work roadmap
- ✓ Return to workplace safely, personal responsibility and Lead Worker Representative(s)
- ✓ Safety Statement and Risk Assessment
- ✓ General advice to prevent the spread of the virus
- ✓ Procedure for Returning to Work
- ✓ Control Measures
- ✓ Dealing with a suspected case of Coronavirus
- ✓ Staff Duties
- ✓ Sick Leave and absence management
- ✓ Employment Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

The assistance and cooperation of all employees, students, parents/guardians, contractors and visitors is critical to the success of the plan. Failure to follow the information and guidance in this document as well as failure to adhere to Loreto Secondary School safety procedures and policies, site safety procedures and policies, and suppliers/manufacturers guidance could result in increased risk and potential harm to individuals and the wider community.

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.

## 2. Return to work roadmap

The Board of Management aims to facilitate the resumption of operations and the return to the workplace by staff as quickly as possible, but the return to the work must be done safely and in strict adherence to the advice and instructions of public health authorities and the Government. In order to comply with such advice and instructions and ensure that health and safety is safeguarded as much as possible, the return of employees to the school campus must take place in a planned and carefully controlled manner.

Details for the reopening of the school campus and the applicable restrictions and controls are outlined in the roadmap in **Appendix 1**.

This roadmap is subject to ongoing review and may be updated or modified as the situation evolves, and new guidance and advice is provided.

## 3. Return to work safely, personal responsibility and Lead Worker Representative(s)

Responsibility for the development and implementation of the Covid-19 Response Plan and the associated control measures lies primarily with the Board of Management.

However, all staff, students, parents/guardians, contractors and visitors have a responsibility both as individuals and collectively to have due regard for their own health and safety and that of others and to assist with the implementation of the Covid-19 Response Plan and associated control measures.

If a staff member has any queries or concerns in relation to the Covid-19 Response Plan, they should contact the Principal.

The Covid-19 Response Plan and associated control measures seek to prevent the spread of Covid-19 and protect the health and safety of all parties within the workplace as much as possible in full adherence with the advice of the public health authorities and the Government. In particular, the Covid-19 Response Plan seeks to be compliant with the Government’s ‘Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business’ (<https://assets.gov.ie/73722/ffd17d70fbb64b498fd809dde548f411.pdf>) and the ‘Return to Work Safely Protocol’ (<https://assets.gov.ie/74103/6b5dc9ecab2a489280a5a0cdcc647c5c.pdf>).

In accordance with the Return to Work plan, the following Lead Worker Representative(s) has been appointed:

Name(s):	Contact details
Maria Walsh	<a href="mailto:mariawalsh@loretofermoy.ie">mariawalsh@loretofermoy.ie</a>
Genevieve Fanning	<a href="mailto:Geneviefanning@loretofermoy.ie">Geneviefanning@loretofermoy.ie</a>

The role of the Lead Worker Representative(s) is to ensure that Covid-19 measures are adhered to in the workplace. The necessary training has been provided for the lead worker (s) and a framework for how they will approach their work at school level has been agreed, which includes regular and meaningful engagement between the lead worker and with the Board of Management to ensure the prevention of the spread of the virus. .

If a staff member has any concerns or observations in relation to the Covid-19 Response Plan and control measures or the adherence to such control measures by employees, contractors or visitors, he/she should contact the Lead Worker Representative(s).

#### 4. Safety Statement and Risk Assessment

A site-specific risk assessment for Loreto Secondary School has been undertaken by the Board of Management and the Safety Statement has been updated accordingly.

A copy of the updated Safety Statement will be available on the school website. Both the risk assessment and safety statement have been updated to include all relevant Covid-19 specific control measures now in place.

#### 5. General advice to prevent the spread of the virus

Staff and visitors should at all times adhere to the up to date advice and instructions of the public health authorities in relation to protecting oneself and others against the risk posed by the Covid-19 virus.

Updated advice from the HSE is available on its website – <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>

All employees should keep informed of the most up to date advice of the public health authorities by consulting websites and other sources of information directly.

The most common respiratory symptoms of Covid 19 infection include; a high temperature, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties.

Any employee of Loreto Secondary School displaying these symptoms should immediately inform the Principal. They will not be permitted to attend work if they have any of the symptoms listed below:

- ✓ High temperature (measured temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher)
- ✓ Cough
- ✓ Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- ✓ Loss of smell, of taste, or distortion of taste

Any staff displaying any these symptoms must self-isolate and must not attend work for 14 days.

Also, any person living with someone who is self-isolating or waiting for a Covid-19 test must restrict their movement for 14 days.

Staff must inform the Principal and Board of Management of this situation as soon as possible. In such cases Covid leave will apply (see DES Circular 0024/2020)

Covid-19 can be most commonly contracted through direct and indirect transmission, droplet or through hand to eye, hand to nose, or hand to mouth transmission. The most common way that Covid-19 transfers is person to person, usually when standing closer than 2 metres, via respiratory droplets from someone who has the illness, for example sneezing, or coughing. This can occur when in close contact to someone who has symptoms. To infect you, it has to get from an infected person's nose or mouth into your eyes, nose or mouth. This can be direct or indirect transmission (on hands, objects, surfaces).

## 6. How to reduce the chance of getting infected by the coronavirus:

### ***Wash your hands frequently***

Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water especially after touching another person or their personal items, after using the toilet and before eating or preparing food.

Why? Washing your hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub kills viruses that may be on your hands.

### ***Maintain social distancing***

Maintain at least 2 metre (6 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing. When someone coughs or sneezes, they spray small liquid droplets from their nose or mouth which may contain virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in the droplets or they may get into your eyes nose or mouth, including the Covid-19 virus if the person coughing has the disease. The droplets may also come in contact with you indirectly and get into your system from items or surfaces through the eyes, nose and mouth.

### ***Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth***

Why? Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth.

### ***Practice 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.

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

Good hygiene practices and washing your hands properly and regularly can help stop the spread of the virus. It is, therefore, crucial that all staff adhere to this advice and adopt the following practices as strictly as possible.

### **Do**

- Wash your hands properly and often
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough and sneeze
- Put used tissues into a bin and wash your hands
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

## Do Not

- Touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean
- Share objects that touch your mouth – for example, bottles, cups, cutlery, etc.

## You should wash your hands:

- After coughing or sneezing
- Before and after eating
- Before and after preparing food
- If you were in contact with someone who has a fever or respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing)
- Before and after being on public transport
- Before and after being in a crowd (especially an indoor crowd)
- When you arrive and leave buildings
- Before having a cigarette or vaping
- If your hands are dirty
- After toilet use

For advice from HSE on how to wash your hands the following link will be helpful: <https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html>

Video advice is available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/HSElive/videos/how-to-properly-wash-your-hands/157857121880007/>

## 7. People at higher risk or vulnerable groups

Current public health guidelines have identified groups who are defined as being at very high risk. The HSE has set out these groups (<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/people-at-higher-risk.html>) which include people who

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

Any staff member who has a concern regarding personal higher risk, or a family member/household contact with higher risk, should discuss the situation with their GP/specialist (or an appropriate medical professional) before making a decision on whether to return to work or not. The Board of Management may seek advice from Medmark in such cases.

## 8. Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)

Where schools are reopening in August 2020, all employees will be required to complete a 'Return to Work Form'. This RTW Form will be sent out to each employee in advance of the school opening. School will request staff (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.

This form will be made available electronically or by post from the Principal prior to opening and employees are obliged to complete this form at least 3 days prior to any proposed date of return to the workplace.

On receipt of the completed form the Principal will provide:

- i. details of the online Induction Training for completion by staff prior to the return to the workplace
- ii. details of any additional health and safety measures applicable to facilitate the staff member's return to the school campus.

In accordance with public health advice, certain responses to the RTW form will preclude an employee from returning to the workplace for health and safety reasons. e.g. the employee's return to the workplace would result in an unacceptable risk to the health and safety of the employee and/or other persons.

In circumstances where a staff member's request to return to the workplace cannot be facilitated the employee will be advised to seek medical advice. Arrangements for remote working will be considered. Decisions with respect to working remotely will be guided by DES instructions and local arrangements by the Board of Management for non-teaching staff.

## 9. Control Measures

- 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, students, parents/guardians and visitors as far as possible within the Loreto Secondary School by removing hazards where possible or minimising exposure to hazards where removal is not possible (e.g. physical distancing).
- These control measures are outlined in the revised Safety Statement for Loreto Secondary School; which will be available on the school's website.
- In accordance with the guidance of the public health authorities, such control measures seek to reduce both the number and duration of contacts that staff, students, parents/guardians and visitors have with other persons.
- The control measures shall continue to be reviewed and updated as required on an ongoing basis.
- It is critical that staff, students, parents/guardians and visitors are aware of, and adhere to, the control measures outlined and that they fully cooperate with all health and safety requirements.
- *Staff, in particular, 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.*
- Staff will be required to complete an online RTW form at least 3 days prior to any return to the school campus. The purpose of the RTW form is to get confirmation from an employee that, to the best of his/her knowledge, he/she has no symptoms of Covid-19 and is not self-isolating or cocooning or awaiting the results of a Covid-19 test.

- It is essential that all staff, students, parents/guardians and visitors are fully aware of the health and safety risks posed by the Covid-19 virus both generally and to them as individuals (e.g. very high risk or high risk category individuals) and have full knowledge and understanding of the control measures in place that aim to prevent the spread of Covid-19 and protect safety, health and welfare within the workplace as far as is practicable.
- All staff will undertake and complete online Covid-19 Induction Training prior to returning to the school campus. The aim of such training is to ensure that employees have full knowledge and understanding of the following:
  - Latest up to-date advice and guidance on public health
  - Covid-19 symptoms
  - Very high risk and high-risk groups
  - What to do if a staff member develops symptoms of Covid-19 while at work
  - Outline of the Covid-19 response plan and details of control measures and health and safety requirements
  - Identification of points of contact
- Staff will be required to complete an online RTW form at least 3 days prior to any return to the school campus. The purpose of the RTW form is to get confirmation from an employee that, to the best of his/her knowledge, he/she has no symptoms of Covid-19 and is not self-isolating or cocooning or awaiting the results of a Covid-19 test.
- Staff should be fully informed of the control measures and their duties and responsibilities in preventing the spread of Covid-19 and kept up to date with any changes to the control measures and any changes in the 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.
- Staff and pupils should 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 should not 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.
- Staff and pupils must 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;

### **Hand hygiene and respiratory Hygiene**

- The best way to prevent the spread of Covid-19 is to use proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette and practice physical distancing.
- It is crucial that all staff students, parents/guardians, contractors and visitors are familiar with, and adopt, good hand and respiratory hygiene practices.
- The Board of Management will raise awareness about the importance of hygiene and will provide instructions on how to wash hands through the provision of guidance documentation and the display of posters at various locations within the school campus. Information posters have been prominently displayed at appropriate locations within the campus including offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilet areas. Such are intended to inform but also remind all parties about the importance of hygiene in preventing the spread of Covid-19 virus and protecting health and safety.
- Staff and students must access 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
- Alcohol-based sanitiser must not be stored or used near heat or naked flame



## **Physical Distancing**

- Physical distancing is a key control measure in reducing the spread of infection. It is currently recommended that a minimum **distance of 2 meters** be maintained between people to minimise risk of transmission of the virus, where possible and practicable.
- **In circumstances ,where notwithstanding the application of the measures in the above framework, physical distancing for a larger class proves not to be possible, then the school will implement the use of face covering in that larger class. This measure should be kept continually under review by the school.**
  - The use of face coverings must be implemented where the 2 meters distance cannot be achieved. For example:
    - (a) more than 24 students in a 49sqm classroom that has been fully cleared
    - (b) more than 20 students in a 42sqm classroom.
- There is currently a strict no handshaking policy in place within Loreto Secondary School.
- All staff, students, parents/guardians, contractors and visitors should avoid direct physical contact with any other persons as far as possible.
- Office capacity is to be limited to facilitate the maintenance of minimum 2m physical distancing between designated workstations and staff. When working within an office, staff should ensure that they only utilise workstations that ensure a minimum 2m physical distance from other persons. If a 2m distance cannot be implemented, staff must wear a mask/face covering.

## **Ventilation**

The following practical measures for the deployment of good ventilation practices in schools are taken from the publication “Practical Steps for the Deployment of Good Ventilation Practices in Schools” and should be observed as a control measure to limit the transmission of Covid-19

1. The opening of windows to introduce fresh air is very important and should continue to be used during school opening times via a proactive rather than reactive approach.
2. Achieving fresh air via a number of windows partially opened as required rather than one window fully open can help to maximise the use of window driven natural ventilation distribution across the room without causing discomfort.
3. In colder weather any local chilling effect can be offset by opening the windows nearest and above the radiators.
4. Consideration should be given to local circumstances that may require to have additional windows open such as after break time activities.
5. Rooms with adequate fresh air should not be stuffy or have condensation on the window glass.
6. Schools should also ensure that all permanent ventilation openings in rooms are fully open and not blocked by wall hangings etc. These normally are either a circular or rectangle ventilation grill on the external classroom wall or linear slot type ventilators built into the window frames. All of these should be opened all the time, if they have been taped and sealed for decorating purposes then the tape/sealing should be removed.
7. All mechanical ventilation systems and any air conditioning systems should be set to 100% fresh air, any air conditioning units that cannot operate on 100% fresh air should be left off. Check with unit suppliers if in doubt.

## **Face Coverings**

- Current general guidance from the HSE in relation to the wearing of face coverings, masks and gloves is available at the following Link: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/face-masks-disposable-gloves.html>
- Face masks/visors shall be provided to all staff upon the return to the workplace and available for use when required.
- Any staff, students or visitors using face masks/coverings should note that such are an additional safety measure and not a replacement for established control measures such as physical distancing, respiratory etiquette, meticulous hand hygiene and avoiding touching the face, nose, eyes and mouth, which continue to be essential.

- Note: wearing of masks is not a substitute for the measures outlined above. However, if masks are worn they should be clean and they should not be shared or handled by other colleagues. Staff and students should keep up to date with the latest Public Health advice issued in regard to masks by Gov.ie/NPHET.
- Additionally, users of face masks/coverings should be aware of the risks associated with using masks/coverings such as the potential for contamination caused by improper removal or storage of face masks/coverings or increased risk of transmission due to the increased tendency to touch face whilst wearing a face mask/covering. Users of face masks/coverings must be vigilant and guard against any potential false sense of security caused by the usage of face masks/coverings.
- The number of staff permitted to work within each staff designated area (staffroom, staff workroom, department rooms, PE office, etc) within the workplace at any particular time shall be limited as a necessary control measure to protect health and safety. Similarly, the number of employees, contractors and/or visitors entering or accessing any office, kitchen or other area within the workplace at any particular time shall also be limited.
- When passing another party within the school campus (e.g. in corridor), staff, students and visitors should seek to maintain as much distance as possible from the other party (e.g. move to the opposite side of a corridor, walk in single file).
- Everybody is required to be vigilant of the need for physical distancing and to protect their own health and safety and that of others by practicing physical distancing as far as possible at all times both within the school campus
- In specific settings where, due to the nature of a work activity, a 2m physical distance cannot be ensured, alternative protective measures will be put in place. These will be decided following a detailed risk assessment process and may include:
  - Maintain at least a **distance of 1 metre** or as much distance as is reasonably practicable
  - The wearing of masks/face coverings in line with Public Health advice
  - Handwashing facilities and hand sanitisers are available at multiple locations within the school campus.
- Arrangements have been made for more regular and thorough cleaning of areas and surfaces within the school in accordance with the guidance of ECDC (the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control) for cleaning in non-healthcare settings. This information is available via the following link:
- [https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/Environmental-persistence-of-SARS\\_CoV\\_2-virusOptions-for-cleaning2020-03-26\\_0.pdf](https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/Environmental-persistence-of-SARS_CoV_2-virusOptions-for-cleaning2020-03-26_0.pdf)
- Regular and thorough cleaning of communal areas and frequently touched surfaces shall be conducted, in particular, toilets, lifts, door handles and kitchens, hand rails. Cleaning will be performed regularly and whenever facilities or surfaces are visibly dirty. If disinfection of an area is required, it must be performed in addition to cleaning, never as a substitute for cleaning.
- Disinfectant wipes, cleaning products, paper towels and waste bins are available at noted locations within the workplace.
- All staff will be provided with disinfectant, hand sanitiser and computer cleaning equipment upon their return to the school. Under no circumstances should these cleaning materials be removed from the building.
- Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their workstation/work area before and after use each day.
- There will be regular collection of used waste disposal bags from offices and other areas within the workplace.
- Access to the school campus will be in line with agreed school procedures and is strictly limited to staff and students. A protocol has been established for contractors, visitors and parents/guardians with access being restricted and limited to those who have obtained prior approval from the Principal.
- Staff and students are encouraged to use stairways within the workplace as much as possible. Lifts should only be used where strictly necessary. The lift has a capacity of 1 person to ensure social distancing.
- 2 meter and 1 meter, where applicable, physical distancing indicative stickers (current guidance) and signs have been located at different locations within the campus and offices, which shall serve as a guide and a reminder for staff, students, parents/guardians, contractors and visitors to adhere to this essential control measure.
- Shower facilities shall not be available for use by staff or students due to the increased risk associated with communal shower facilities and areas. This shall be reviewed in line with government guidance.

- Morning break will now be embedded in the morning class and supervised by teachers. This should be a mask break for students, if the weather permits.
- Staff must bring their own cup, cutlery, plate etc. and clean this equipment and utensils after use before storing them safely. There will be no communal set of kitchenware and utensils. Kitchen facilities will be made available to staff at various locations within the school campus to facilitate social distancing at breaks.
- Staff should ensure that they maintain a minimum 2m physical distance from other persons during lunch and break periods, where possible and practicable. This will mean a reduced capacity for the staffroom and staff workroom.
- Students should not approach the staffroom during breaks for meetings with staff unless for an urgent reason. If students need to discuss match fixtures, drop off homework etc. that can be facilitated in class or via Office365 (TEAMS/Email).
- Students are encouraged to download textbooks to an electronic device to reduce the need to access lockers during class time which will reduce students movement within the school building
- Staff are still permitted to leave the workplace for their lunch and break periods if they wish to do so.
- 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 employees, contractors and visitors at the workplace. A detailed log of those entering the school campus will be maintained.
- Under current guidance all meetings must be conducted via phone or online virtual platforms (e.g. Microsoft Teams). This includes meetings between staff unless such meetings can be conducted in accordance with social distancing requirements. It is possible that meetings and events will be permitted within the school campus in accordance with applicable Government restrictions and guidelines.
- The correct use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as face shields/visors or clear plastic barriers or Perspex screens etc. may be required in some circumstances to address identified risks of spreading the virus.
- PPE is used to address a risk where other preventative measures alone are not sufficient to control against the risk to a reasonably practicable level. For a limited number of employees, PPE will need to be used occasionally or constantly due to the nature of certain work activities or work areas.
- Such include roles where:
  - there are high levels of daily interaction with people e.g. reception and administration
  - SNAs
  - there is a need for close cooperation with other persons or minimum 2m physical distancing cannot always be ensured e.g. caretaking, cleaning, maintenance
- Where PPE is required by staff, they will be notified accordingly and be provided with the necessary PPE and provided with training in the proper use, cleaning, storage and disposal of PPE.
- PPE needs to be consistently and properly worn when required. In addition, it must be regularly inspected, cleaned, maintained and replaced as necessary.
- Gloves are not required generally within the workplace for infection prevention and control purposes according to current guidance. Due to the risks associated with the usage of gloves, the Board of Management will not be providing gloves to staff for general use.
- Disposable gloves are worn in medical settings and are not as effective in daily life. Wearing disposable gloves can give a false sense of security and the Covid-19 virus can get on gloves in the same way as it gets on hands. A person's hands and other surface areas can become contaminated when gloves are removed and disposed.
- The wearing of disposable gloves is not a substitute for good hygiene and handwashing practices.
- The standard First Aid/Emergency procedure shall continue to apply in Loreto Secondary School.
- Additional information on First Aid is available at:
  - [https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid-19/covid-19\\_advice\\_for\\_employers\\_and\\_employees/covid\\_19\\_-\\_advice\\_for\\_employers\\_and\\_employees.html#13](https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid-19/covid-19_advice_for_employers_and_employees/covid_19_-_advice_for_employers_and_employees.html#13) and
  - [https://www.phecit.ie/PHECC/Publications\\_and\\_Resources/Newsletters/Newsletter\\_Items/2020/PHECC\\_COVID\\_19\\_Advisory\\_v1.aspx?WebsiteKey=e406219d-01ae-4393-b7e5-dea9321c039d](https://www.phecit.ie/PHECC/Publications_and_Resources/Newsletters/Newsletter_Items/2020/PHECC_COVID_19_Advisory_v1.aspx?WebsiteKey=e406219d-01ae-4393-b7e5-dea9321c039d)
- In an emergency or in case of a serious incident, call for an ambulance or the fire brigade on 112/999
- Contact the Principal or nearest first aider giving details of location and type of medical incident.
- Trained first aiders shall be provided with updated guidance on dealing with first aid/emergency cases.

## 10. Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19

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

Staff should not attend work if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19. The following outlines how the Board of Management will deal with a suspected case that may arise during the course of work.

The Board of Management has:

- Appointed an appropriate person for dealing with suspected cases
- A designated isolation area available within the school building. The possibility of having more than one person displaying signs of Covid-19 has been considered and a contingency plan for dealing with additional cases has been planned. The designated isolation area is behind a closed door and away from other workers.

If a staff member displays symptoms of Covid-19 while at work in Loreto Secondary School the following are the procedures to be implemented:

- 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 2 metres away from the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic person at all times
- Provide a mask for the person presenting with symptoms if one is available. 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 and advise them to 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. At all times the individual should follow the directions of their GP and public health service
- 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.
- School staff should be encouraged to download the HSE COVID-19 tracker app to assist Public Health for contact tracing purposes both in and out of the school setting.

## 11. 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. In order to facilitate a safe return to work, these duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- i. Adhere to the Covid-19 Response Plan and the control measures outlined. 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 workplace. All staff have a key role to play

- ii. Coordinate and work with their colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained, and office capacity limitations are complied with
- iii. Make themselves aware of the symptoms of Covid-19 and monitor their own wellbeing
- iv. Self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any symptoms of Covid-19
- v. Not return or attend school if they have symptoms of Covid-19 under any circumstances.
- vi. If they develop any symptoms of Covid-19 whilst within the school campus, they should adhere to the procedure outlined in Section 8 above
- vii. Complete the RTW form before they return to work and fully comply with the Return to the Workplace Safely Procedure
- viii. Must inform the Principal if there are any other circumstances relating to Covid-19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to facilitate their safe return to the workplace
- ix. Must complete online Covid-19 Induction Training and any other training required by the Board of Management prior to their return to work
- x. Must be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices
- xi. Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.
- xii. Not to return to or attend school in the event of the following:  
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.
- xiii. 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 in their school as part of mass or serial testing as advised by Public Health

## 12. Sick Leave and absence management

### Covid Leave

The management of a Covid-19 related absence will be managed in line with agreed procedures – currently addressed for teaching personnel and SNAs in DES Circular Letter 0024/2020 but this will be updated for the new school year.

For privately paid non-teaching staff, the Board will be responding in line with HSE advice with regards to high risk or vulnerable groups. Sick leave policies may have to be amended.

A staff member who has a concern regarding personal higher risk, or a family member/household contact with higher risk, should discuss the situation with their GP/specialist (or an appropriate medical professional) and follow their advice in relation to whether or not they should return to work.

Reasonable accommodation of employees will also be a factor such as the consideration being given to the employee to work remotely.

The RTW form opens the conversation between the employer and the employee to discuss their individual circumstances in a sensitive manner. Please speak with the Principal.

## 13. Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

The Board of Management aims to protect and support the health and wellbeing of all staff (physical, mental, spiritual etc.) both at work, whether in the school campus or at home and outside of work. The Board of Management is mindful

that the support and promotion of employee health and wellbeing is particularly important in the current context where the Covid-19 pandemic has caused considerable challenges for, and disruption to, people's personal, family and social lives as well as their work arrangements.

The Board of Management aims to foster a culture and work environment that support healthy behaviours and employee wellbeing and shall continue to make health and wellbeing tools and guidance available to staff as well as organising suitable support programmes, initiatives and events.

By way of reminder, employees should take note of the following health and wellbeing resources that are available:

The DES Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme is a free, confidential and independent wellbeing support service that is available to teaching staff and SNAs. The new EAP service provider details will be launched on 27th July 2020. Spectrum.Life is the new EAP service.

These are challenging times for everyone. Should a staff member experience any stress or anxiety in respect of work or work arrangements, he/she should feel free to speak to the Principal.


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 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.

	Appendix 1 – Return to Work Roadmap
<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Proposed return – August/September 2020</b>
<b>Government Roadmap</b>  	<p><b>Board of Management to have developed a Covid-19 Response Plan (to reflect DES guidelines).</b></p> <p><b>Board of Management to have issued a Pre-Return to Work form to all staff to be returned and completed 3 days before returning to the school campus.</b></p> <p><b>Board of Management to have provided necessary online induction training to staff in relation to Covid-19.</b></p> <p><b>Board of Management will have reviewed and updated relevant school policies (i.e. Code of Behaviour, breaching or non-compliance with responsibilities, etc.) to take account of any changes that might be required as a result of Covid-19 protocols.</b></p> <p><b>Board of Management to have updated Safety Statement to address the risks and control measures in relation to Covid-19.</b></p>
<b>Staff level and activity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff (not at risk) return to work in line with risk assessment</li> <li>• RTW forms completed and returned</li> <li>• Induction training completed</li> <li>• No high-risk employees to return (subject to risk assessment process and where relevant, in adherence to DES circular letters on protocols)</li> </ul>
<b>Control Measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety information and protocols communicated to all staff, pupils and parent/guardians</li> <li>• Appropriate signage in line with public health guidelines to be displayed throughout school (buildings and grounds).</li> <li>• Physical distancing requirements arranged in line with social distancing risk assessment (one-way systems, staggered break times, use of stairs, lifts and re-organising the school campus to maintain 2 metre distancing, social distancing screens, school library, etc.)</li> <li>• Classroom layouts in line with government social distancing requirements</li> <li>• Virtual meetings – it is possible that meetings and events will be permitted (by late August) within a school building in accordance with applicable Government restrictions and guidelines. This would also relate to BOM meetings, parent teacher meetings, etc.</li> <li>• Covid compliant staff room and work areas</li> <li>• PPE available where required</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hand sanitisers all areas</li><li>• Standard cleaning and maintenance regimes in place and detailed records retained</li><li>• Staggered starting/finish/breaks arranged</li><li>• Sign in/sign out arrangements in place for tracing purposes</li><li>• Appropriate First Aid procedures in place and necessary training to be provided to first aiders</li><li>• Additional workstations available (if required)</li><li>• Designated isolation room(s) available</li><li>• Visitor access protocol in place</li><li>• Delivery protocol in place</li><li>• Guidance for staff in relation to work related travel</li><li>• Structure for regular communication and information sharing opportunities in place to reinforce and advise staff of any new safety requirements</li><li>• All safety procedures and protocols are adhered to by staff</li><li>• School policies (such as Code of Behaviour, Health and Safety, Sick Leave) to be updated as necessary</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li></ul>



## Appendix 2 - Covid-19 – Checklist for reopening of schools

Area	Actions	Action Date	Responsibility	Complete √
Policies and procedures	<p>Covid-19 Response Plan to be prepared</p> <p>Risk assessment and Safety Statement to be updated</p> <p>Pre- Return to Work (RTW) self-assessment questionnaire to be prepared</p> <p>On-going consultation with all staff</p> <p>Training module to be prepared for a Return to Work (RTW)</p> <p>Planning to start on social distancing arrangements for school – one-way systems, use of lifts, classroom layouts, social distancing screens, social areas, etc.</p> <p>Break time arrangements to be reviewed</p> <p>Arrangements for visitors and deliveries to be prepared</p> <p>Sign in-sign out procedures to be reviewed (contact tracing)</p> <p>Protocol to be prepared to deal with person who develops signs and symptoms of Covid-19 on school campus</p> <p>Need to identify isolation area(s) within building</p> <p>Code of Behaviour to be reviewed to address non-compliance issues</p> <p>Guidance to be prepared for staff if working from home</p> <p>Transport arrangements to be reviewed particularly drop and collection areas</p> <p>Checklist to be developed for safe use of equipment in specialist rooms</p> <p>First Aid procedures to be reviewed</p> <p>Supervision arrangements to be reviewed</p> <p>Need to establish where PPE will be required by staff</p> <p>Need to have a protocol for work activities by staff where physical distancing is not possible</p> <p>Need to develop a schedule for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection of all frequently touched surfaces within school campus</p> <p>Need to have a procedure for staff when handling books and equipment</p>			

<b>Requirements for all areas</b>	<b>Physical distancing</b> <b>Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette protocols in place</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When entering and exiting vehicles</li> <li>• When entering and exiting school buildings</li> </ul> <b>Hand washing facilities and sanitisers in multiple locations</b> <b>Necessary signage and information displayed for the management of Covid-19</b> <b>Additional waste collection points</b> <b>Supervision plan to ensure compliance with social distancing requirements</b> <b>Monitoring of access to and egress from school campus</b>			
<b>Staff</b>	<b>No high-risk staff allowed to return to work</b> <b>Receive necessary training prior to returning to work</b> <b>Consulted about Covid-19 Response Plan and Safety Statement update</b> <b>Appoint a Lead Worker</b> <b>Covid supervisor appointed</b> <b>Provide with information and guidance around a safe return to work, medical information, personal responsibility and duties</b> <b>Continue to use virtual meetings until public health policy guidelines change</b>			
<b>Parents/guardians and students</b>	<b>On-going consultation prior to reopening</b> <b>No high-risk students allowed to return to school</b> <b>To be provided with necessary information and guidance to prepare for school reopening</b> <b>Updated procedures to be outlined and explained</b> <b>COB to be resigned following review</b> <b>System for regular communication to be established</b>			
<b>Classrooms</b>	<b>Arrangements for classrooms to be reviewed in light of public health policy and the necessary control measures required to protect the health and safety of staff and pupils</b>			
<b>Administration</b>	<b>Arrangements for administration areas to be reviewed in light of public health policy and the necessary control measures required to protect health and safety of staff and students</b>			
<b>Visitors and contractors</b>	<b>Policy to be put in place</b>			
<b>School yards and pitches</b>	<b>Social distancing plan to be prepared</b> <b>Ground markings (2m currently)/indicative stickers to be considered</b>			

<b>Toilets</b>	<b>Cleaning regime with records in place</b> <b>Cleaning of frequently touched surfaces such as vending machines, coffee machines and door handles</b> <b>Sufficient liquid hand-wash soap and sanitisers available</b> <b>Social distancing plan</b>			
<b>Costs and purchasing requirements</b>	<b>Additional equipment for classrooms</b> <b>Additional supervision</b> <b>Signage</b> <b>Indicative floor stickers</b> <b>Sanitisers</b> <b>PPE – face coverings, screens, gloves, etc.</b> <b>Planning for additional cleaning staff and/or increased contactor costs</b> <b>Additional cleaning and disinfectant materials</b> <b>Essential cleaning materials for staff to keep their own work areas clean i.e. wipes/disinfection products, paper towels, etc.</b> <b>Additional bins for waste disposal</b> <b>Training – First Aid; use of PPE</b> <b>Covid-19 supervisor appointed</b>			
<b>Additional considerations</b>	<b>Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities</b> <b>P/T meetings</b> <b>Open evenings</b> <b>Parent Council, Board of Management and Student Council meetings</b> <b>No sharing of equipment</b> <b>Water taps to be shut down</b> <b>“No hand shaking, no hugging, no high five protocol” within school facility</b> <b>“No photos or selfies protocol” within school facility</b> <b>Lifts to be used where strictly necessary</b>			



