
COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of Primary and Special Schools

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This is a living document and may be reviewed and amended to take into account new guidance from www.Gov.ie, www.dbei.ie, www.hse.ie, www.hpsc.ie, www.hsa.ie; www.education.ie or agreements with education partners as appropriate for primary and special schools.

Appendices

- Appendix 1** Template COVID-19 School Policy Statement
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- Appendix 3** Lead Worker Representative
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- Appendix 5** School Contact Tracing Log

1) Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

The Department has worked intensively with the education partners to develop consistent plans, advice, protocols and guidance for schools, including the School COVID-19 Response plan. There is a suite of documentation available to support schools to reopen safely and fully including guidance on learning, school programmes and wellbeing for the 2020/21 school year. There is also information on funding, staffing and resources to schools to support

COVID-19 measures. Schools are advised to familiarise themselves with these documents. All of the documents will be available at **gov.ie/backtoschool**

In addition the Department has a communication plan for school reopening which focuses on ensuring that schools, school communities and all stakeholders will have the relevant information to support the reopening and continued operation of schools. There is a particular focus on supporting parents and students through the appropriate use of media channels, through schools themselves and on **gov.ie**

2) What is a COVID-19 Response Plan?

A Covid-19 Response Plan is designed to support the staff and Board of Management of Ballycurrane N.S. in putting measures in place that aim to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in the school environment.

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

It is important that the resumption of school-based teaching and learning and the reopening of school facilities complies with the public health advice and guidance documents prepared by the Department. Doing so minimises the risk to pupils, staff and others. The response plan supports the sustainable reopening of 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 Return to Work Safely Protocol, the key to a safe and sustainable return to work, and reopening of schools 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 success of the plan.

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

Planning and Preparing for Return to School

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

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

Before reopening schools for the 2020/21 school year each school will need to have processes in place to include the following:

- Arrangements to keep up to date with public health advice, changes to any Government plans for the safe reopening of society and Department of Education updates;
- Arrangements to pass on this information in a timely manner to staff, pupils, parents and others as required;
- Ensured that staff have reviewed the training materials provided by the Department of Education (**details at Section 4.1**);
- Provided staff with access to the Return to Work (RTW) form (**details at Section 4.2**);
- Identified 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**);
- Reviewed the school buildings to check the following:
 - Does the water system need flushing at outlets following low usage to prevent Legionella disease;
 - Has school equipment and mechanical ventilation been checked for signs of deterioration or damage before being used again;
 - Have bin collections and other essential services resumed.

There are checklists in place to assist schools on the details of what is needed for these arrangements in the Appendices of this plan.

Induction Training

All 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

Note: Induction Training for reopening schools in the new school year is under development by the Department. This will be made available to all schools and staff in advance of school reopening.

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

Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)

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

A RTW form should be completed and returned **3 days** before returning to work.

The principal will also provide details of the **Induction Training** for completion by staff and details of any additional health and safety measures in place in the school to facilitate the staff member's return to the school facility.

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

People at very high risk (extremely vulnerable):

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

- are over 70 years of age - even if fit and well
- have had an organ transplant
- are undergoing active chemotherapy for cancer
- are having radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
- have cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
- are having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
- are having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
- have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immune suppression drugs
- have severe respiratory conditions including cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, pulmonary fibrosis, lung fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and severe COPD
- have a condition that means they have a very high risk of getting infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell)
- are taking medicine that makes you much more likely to get infections (such as high doses of steroids or immune suppression therapies)
- have a serious heart condition and are pregnant

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

In addition, when staff members of Ballycurrane N.S. have returned to work, they will be required to sign in/sign out daily for the purpose of Contact Tracing.

Return to work safely and 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.

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

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

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

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

Role of the Lead Worker Representative

In summary, the role of the LWR is to:

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

Name(s) of lead worker representative:	Contact details:
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Aisling Walsh	Ballycurrane N.S. 024 96533
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Name of Deputy Lead Worker Representative	Contact Details
Mary Roche	Ballycurrane n.s. 024-96533

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

Signage

Signage outlining the signs and symptoms of Covid 19, and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene has been displayed throughout the school in prominent areas such as office/SET room, classrooms, toilets and corridor in to the Junior classroom.

These will include age appropriate key health messages – hand washing, sneeze and cough etiquette etc.

Health and Safety Risk Assessment

In conjunction with its annual review of the schools safety, Health and Welfare policy, the board of management has carried out a risk assessment to identify and mitigate any additional risks due to Covid 19. Any necessary changes have been incorporated in the Safety Health and Welfare Policy.

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, schools should call for an ambulance or the fire brigade on 112/999 giving details of location and type of medical incident

Access to School and Contact Log

To keep everyone in our school community safe, access to Ballycurrane N.S. will be restricted to essential visitors only. Anyone who needs to visit the school must make an appointment in advance by telephoning the school.

Anyone who must pay an essential visit to the school, must contact the office first. If office is not attended, Mr. Gough will meet them from the door of his building. If it is necessary for visitors to go to any other parts of the school, they will be escorted there by a staff member.

Deliveries to the school must be arranged in advance. In so far it is possible, deliveries should be made within the hours the secretary is in the school.

A detailed sign in/sign out log of those entering the school facilities should be maintained. The school should maintain a log of staff and pupil contacts. A sample contact log is available at **Appendix 5**.

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

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

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

Control Measures - To prevent Introduction and Spread of COVID-19 in Schools

A range of essential control measures have been implemented to reduce the risk of the spread of Covid-19 virus and to protect the safety, health and welfare of staff, pupils, parents and visitors as far as possible within the school. The control measures shall continue to be reviewed and updated as required on an ongoing basis.

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

Staff should note that they have a legal obligation under Section 13 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 to comply with health and safety requirements and to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves, their colleagues and other parties within the workplace.

How to Minimise the Risk of Introduction of COVID-19 into Schools:

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

- Staff and pupils that have symptoms not to attend school, to phone their doctor and to follow HSE guidance on self-isolation;
- Staff and pupils not to attend school if they have been identified by the HSE as a contact for person with COVID-19 and to follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement;
- 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**);
- Everyone entering the school building needs to perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser;
- Visitors to the school during the day should be 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.

Children who should not attend School

If your child is in one of the following categories, he/she should not attend school –

- Children who has been diagnosed with Covid 19
- Children who have symptoms of Covid 19
- Children who have been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with Covid 19
- Children who have a suspected case of Covid 19 and the outcome of the test is pending.
- Children with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical profession not to attend school.
- Children who have returned home after travelling abroad and must self isolate for a period of 14 days
- Children who are generally unwell

Supporting the Learning of Children who Cannot Attend School for COVID-19 related reasons

If a child is not able to attend school for an extended period of time, the class teacher (and/or the Special Education Teacher, where relevant) will provide work to support the child's learning at home and this will be shared with parents/guardians.

Only children who have to remain at home for COVID-19 related reasons will be provided support for remote learning.

The majority of parents have already provided an email address at which the school can contact them to support Home Learning. This will be especially important if the school, or parts of the school have to close due to HSE advice. Parents, if you have not already

done so, please email ballycurranens1@gmail.com and you will be added to the Contact List for Home Learning.

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

There is no requirement to temperature check children when they come to school in the morning. It would be very helpful if parents/guardians could check their children's temperature before they come to school.

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.

Hand Hygiene

Sanitiser dispensers have been installed throughout the school e.g. at each entrance, in each classroom, etc. Hot water and soap are available at each sink in the classrooms, toilets, and kitchenette.

Hand hygiene will be promoted and encouraged, and parents/guardians are asked to support the school in reinforcing this message. <https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-yourhands>.

Pupils and staff should perform hand hygiene:

- On arrival at school
- Before eating or drinking

- After using the toilet
- After playing outdoors
- When their hands are physically dirty
- When they cough or sneeze Staff and pupils should understand why hand hygiene is important as well as when and how to wash their hands.

Posters displaying hand washing techniques and promoting hand washing will be placed on walls adjacent to washing facilities and can be laminated or placed in a plastic sleeve.

Physical Distancing

At Primary school level, 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, for example, if a child has an injury and needs 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.

Changes to Classrooms, School Layout and to School Routines

The DES guidelines recognise that a common sense approach is needed in our primary school. To that end, every effort will be made to limit interactions within classrooms, to limit contact between the children of both classrooms.

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.

Maintaining physical distancing in the school environment is recommended as one of the key control measures to minimize the risk of the introduction and spread of COVID-19.

Ballycurrane N.S. has reconfigure both classrooms and SET room ensuring all pupils are sitting the minimum of 1 meter apart as necessary to support physical distancing in line with the guidance in advance of school reopening.

Team Teaching/Special Education Teacher/Special Needs Assistant.

Staff members (particularly SET and SNA) can rotate between areas/classes but this will be minimized where possible. When rotation occurs, agreed sanitizing routines will be observed.

In keeping with our Special Education Policy, learning support will be provided by a blended approach of in-class support and withdrawal.

- 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 the SET room will be wiped clean in between different pupils or groups attending.

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. However, Junior and Senior infants will have their own “pod”, with 1st Class and 2nd Class having their own “pod” also.

3rd Class to 6th Class

Children from 3rd Class to 6th Class will be arranged 1metre apart from each other. All unnecessary furniture will be removed from the classrooms to create as much room as possible.

Doors and Windows

Where practical, all internal doors will be left open to minimise hand contact with common surfaces. 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.

Windows should be opened when children are singing as a group, or when they are playing musical instruments. Tin whistles should not be shared between pupils.

Breaks

The DES guidelines states that the risk of transmission from contact with outside surfaces or play areas is low. Breaks will not be staggered. Railings have been erected so that each classroom bubble will have its own separate play area.

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 drink with other children.

Children will eat their lunches at their desks.

Designated Drop-Off Area for forgotten items

Essential items that need to be dropped off to the school may be left in a plastic container left in carpark in front of the senior classroom. All items must be placed in a plastic bag and labelled. This container will be checked regularly to ensure that there is a swift collection of items dropped off.

Books, Copies, Pencils etc.

Children should use their own books, pencils, pens, etc and as far as possible not share with other pupils. Scissors, paint brushes and calculators (3rd to 6th class) will be loaned from the school to the pupils for the full year. Upon completion of the year, these items will have to be returned.

Uniform/ Tracksuits

There is no guidance or advice to say that school tracksuits or uniforms should be washed everyday and this is not practical for most families. However, the BOM will allow uniforms to be worn Monday, Wednesday and Fridays. Tracksuits to be worn every Tuesday and Thursday.

Photocopying/Using the Telephone

Any staff member who uses the photocopier should clean it down after use with the wipes provided. The same procedure will apply to using the school telephone.

ICTs

A timetable will be drawn up for the use of common ICTs. Devices should be cleaned after use and before they are returned to the charging trolley.

Visiting Teachers/Coaches

For the first term all GAA training and participation in inter-county matches shall be deferred. Similarly, there will be no visiting extra-curricular teachers to the school. This will be reviewed after Term.

Substitute Teachers and SNAs

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.

Special Education Teachers may step into classrooms in the event that a Class Teacher is absent and a substitute teacher cannot be found. Splitting classes between other Class Bubbles is not an option at the present time.

Shared Special Education Teachers

One of our Special Education posts is shared with another school, three days per week.

For the coming school year, this teacher will be in Ballycurrane N.S. every Monday and Tuesday. The DES has not issued any specific guidelines around shared teachers so this

practice may continue. We will liaise with the other school to agree procedures around contact tracing and sanitisation.

Physical Education and P.E. Equipment

Physical Education lessons will take place outside when the weather allows.

Staff members and pupils may take additional breaks outside during the school day.

A timetable will be placed in the staffroom and teachers may ‘book’ P.E. equipment for use with their class. Teachers should leave enough time between bookings to allow for cleaning of the P.E. equipment, and where possible, two classes should not use the same equipment on the same day.

Drop Off and Collection Times

To help with reducing the amount of traffic around the school gates, children are asked to walk to school if it is at all possible.

Due to Covid 19 restrictions, it will not be possible for parents/guardians to come onto the school grounds before/after school. To minimise the risks, and to help us to maintain social distancing, the children may not come onto the school grounds before the school doors open at 9:00

- Timetable for drop-off in morning**

9:00	4th Class	6 th Class
9:05	3 rd Class	5 TH Class
9:10	1 st Class	2 nd Class
9:15	J. Infants	S. Infants
9:20	Bus Drop Off	

- Timetable for pick-up at end of day**

2:45	Bus Pick Up	
2:50	1 st Class	2 nd Class
2:55	3 rd Class	5 th Class

3:00	4 th Class	6 th Class
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Entering & Exiting the School

Each class will enter and exit the building using a specific entrance:

- Juniors – 2nd Class – Entrance at corner of Carpark
- 3rd to 6th Class – Entrance at middle of carpark

Note: At no time should the bottom gate be used

Parent/ Teacher Meetings

Parent/Teacher Meetings may take place via phone/ Zoom or be postponed. We will assess the situation closer to the time

Kitchenette

Staff members should bring their own cups, bottles, cutlery, etc. to school and avoid sharing utensils in the staffroom as far as possible. To facilitate the 2 metre social distancing between staff in the staffroom, only 1 staff member will be permitted at once into this area.

Teaching and Learning

As a staff, we are very aware that the children have been away from school since March 12th. We appreciate the time and effort that went into Home Learning, and we recognise the challenges that Home Learning presented for all families. Each child will be a different place in relation to her learning, and we wish to assure you that staff will take that into consideration when planning for Teaching and Learning during the 2020/2021 school year. 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

Supporting Wellbeing

We will work on 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 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 to school.

Use of PPE in Schools

PPE will not be required to be worn within schools according to current occupational and public health guidance. However, for a limited number of staff, PPE will need to be used occasionally or constantly due to the nature of certain work activities or work areas. This might include roles such as:

- Assisting with intimate care needs
- Where a suspected case of COVID-19 is identified while the school is in operation
- Where staff are particularly vulnerable to infection but are not on the list of those categorised as people in very high risk groups, or may be living with those who are in the very high risk category.

Appropriate PPE will be available for dealing with suspected COVID-19 cases, intimate care needs and for first aid. Where staff provide healthcare to children with medical needs in the school environment they should apply standard precautions as per usual practice.

Masks

Cloth face coverings are not suitable for children under the age of 13 and anyone who:

- Has trouble breathing;
- Is unconscious or incapacitated;
- Is unable to remove it without help;
- Has special needs to who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the face covering.

For staff, face coverings should not be required if physical distancing is possible and practiced appropriately. Wearing a face covering will conceal facial expression and make communication difficult.

The use of a visor as an alternative may be considered where there is a concern regarding prolonged close contact and exposure to fluid/respiratory droplets. [Advice on how to properly use face coverings can be found here.](#)

Gloves

The use of disposable gloves in the school by pupils or staff is not generally appropriate but may be necessary for intimate care settings. Routine use does not protect the wearer and may expose others to risk from contaminated gloves.

Routine use of disposable gloves is not a substitute for hand hygiene.

Hygiene and Cleaning

Sanitiser dispensers have been installed throughout the school e.g. at each entrance, in each classroom.

Warm water and soap is available in all classrooms, and at each sink in the toilets, staff bathroom and staff room.

Hand hygiene will be promoted and encouraged, and parents/guardians are asked to support the school in re-enforcing this message.

In accordance with the DES guidelines, the school will be thoroughly cleaned at least once per day. During break time also, particular attention will be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, handrails, chairs/arm rests, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities.

All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area. Under no circumstances should these cleaning materials be removed from the building. Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day.

Waste will be collected regularly from offices and other areas within the school.

Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.)

Illness and Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19

We love to see all of our children at school every day. However, under the current circumstances, parents/guardians must keep children at home if they display any Covid-19

Symptoms. <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/symptoms.html>

Staff must not attend school if they display any symptoms.

An area in the Junior Building is the designated isolation area in the event of a child or teacher displaying symptoms. Should there be more than one room required then office will be used.

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

The pupil will be accompanied to the isolation area. A distance of 2 meters will be maintained. If this is not possible, the person accompanying the child must wear a face covering. If a pupil has a suspected case, parents/guardians will be contacted immediately by telephone. To help us in this regard, parents are asked to make sure that their contact details are kept up to date at all times.

Staff members who are symptomatic should immediately inform the Principal/Deputy Principal and go to the isolation area.

A face covering will be provided to the staff member/child who is symptomatic. The staff member or child who is symptomatic should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. If the staff member/child is well enough to go home, arrangements will be made for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible. Siblings of this child will also be requested to go home. Both the child and the siblings will wait in the designated area/s until they are collected.

Anyone who is symptomatic is advised to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used to travel home.

If the staff member/child is too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a Covid-19 suspect.

The isolation area(s) and work areas will be thoroughly cleaned in line with the guidelines.

If any member of the school staff, or a pupil of the school is diagnosed with COVID-19, the Principal will contact the HSE for advice.

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.

It is important to remember than any of us can get sick or unwell, and if we do, we need understanding and support from those around us. It is essential that anyone who feels unwell makes that known to the Principal/Deputy Principal as soon as possible.

COVID-19 Related Absence Management

COVID-19 related absences will be managed in line with agreed procedures with the Department of Education.

Teacher or SNA Absence and Substitution

If a teacher/SNA is unable to attend school, every effort will be made to secure a substitute teacher/SNA for the class/pupil. If a substitute teacher/SNA is not available, it is not appropriate for the class/pupil to be divided into groups and accommodated in other classes. In such circumstances, it may not be possible for the class/pupil to attend on that day. If that is the case, as much notice as possible will be given to parents.

In the unlikely event a sub teacher cannot be gotten, class packs will be available and either Ms. Keogh/Pauline or Mary will be stanby to supervise.

Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

Support for school staff wellbeing will be provided by Department Support Services including the PDST and CSL, as well as by the HSE's Health Promotion Team. An Occupational Health Strategy is in place as a supportive resource for staff in schools. The aim of the Occupational Health Strategy is to promote the health and wellbeing of employees in the workplace, with a strong focus on prevention. The Occupational Health Strategy comprises the Employee Assistance Service and the Occupational Health Service. The Employee Assistance Service (EAS) is provided by Spectrum Life under the logo of 'Wellbeing Together: Folláinne Le Chéile'.

A free-phone confidential helpline 1800 411 057 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and staff members are encouraged to make use of the service when the need arises.

COVID-19 Policy Statement

Ballycurrane N.S. is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our staff and a safe learning environment for all our pupils. To ensure that, we have developed the following COVID-19 Response Plan. The BOM and all school staff are responsible for the implementation of this plan and a combined effort will help contain the spread of the virus. We will:

- continue to monitor our COVID-19 response and amend this plan in consultation with our staff
- provide up to date information to our staff and pupils on the Public Health advice issued by the HSE and Gov.ie
- display information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and correct hand-washing techniques
- agree with staff, a worker representative who is easily identifiable to carry out the role outlined in this plan
- inform all staff and pupils of essential hygiene and respiratory etiquette and physical distancing requirements
- adapt the school to facilitate physical distancing as appropriate in line with the guidance and direction of the Department of Education
- keep a contact log to help with contact tracing
- ensure staff engage with the induction / familiarisation briefing provided by the Department of Education
- implement the agreed procedures to be followed in the event of someone showing symptoms of COVID-19 while at school
- provide instructions for staff and pupils to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during school time
- implement cleaning in line with Department of Education advice

All school staff will be consulted on an ongoing basis and feedback is encouraged on any concerns, issues or suggestions.

This can be done through the Lead Worker Representative(s), who will be supported in line with the agreement between the Department and education partners.

Signed (Chairman): _____

Date: _____

Signed (Principal): _____

Date _____

Appendix 2 Pre-Return to Work Questionnaire COVID-19

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

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

Name: _____

Name of School: _____

Name of Principal: _____

Date: _____

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

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

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

Signed: _____

Appendix 3 **Lead Worker Representative – Primary and Special Schools**

The COVID-19 Return to Work Safely Protocol is designed to support employers and workers to put measures in place that will prevent the spread of 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 COVID-19 Return to Work Safely Protocol;
- the Guidance and FAQs for Public Service Employers during COVID-19;
- COVID-19 Response Plan for Primary and Special Schools (available on the Department of Education website).

1. Collaborative Approach

Responsibility for the development and implementation of the COVID-19 Response Plan and the associated 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 students. Adherence to the Return to Work Protocol will only be achieved if everyone has a shared responsibility in implementing the measures contained within the 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 Return to Work Safely Protocol and current public health advice;
- In conjunction with school management, monitor adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19;
- Conduct regular reviews of safety measures;
- Report any issues of concern immediately to school management and keep records of such issues and actions taken to rectify them;
- Consult with the school management on the school's COVID-19 Response Plan in the event of someone developing COVID-19 while in school including the location of an isolation area and a safe route to that area;
- Following any incident assess with the school management any follow up action that is required;
- Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace;
- Make representations to school management on behalf of their colleagueson matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.

3. What can a Lead Worker Representative Do?

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

- Cleaning protocols and their implementation
- Physical Distancing
- Implementation of one-way systems in the school to ensure social distancing including when entering and exiting the school
- Hand Hygiene facilities including their location and whether they are stocked and maintained
- Hand sanitising
- Staff awareness around hand hygiene in the school
- Respiratory hygiene
- Personal Protective Equipment
- At Risk Groups
- Visitors/Contractors

4. Lead Worker Representative

Every school will appoint one Lead Worker Representative.

5. Deputy Lead Worker Representative/ Assistant Lead Worker Representative

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

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

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

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

The school staff are entitled to select staff members for the LWR, Deputy LWR and Assistant LWR positions as appropriate. The LWR/ Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR represents all staff in the workplace regardless of role and must be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of different staff cohorts. In this regard, if a teacher is selected for the role of LWR,

then the Deputy LWR/ Assistant LWR should be selected from the non-teaching staff where feasible and vice versa.

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

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

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

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

- Receive information and training in respect of their role [*further detail to be provided*];
- Be consulted by school management on the control measures being put in place by the school to minimise the risk of being exposed to COVID-19;
- Regular communication with school management on issues related to COVID-19;
- Be informed of changes in practice arising from COVID-19 response measures;

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

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

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

8. Procedure for dealing with issues that arise

Where an issue of concern is identified by the LWR (or is notified to the LWR by a staff member), the LWR should bring this to the attention of the Principal. Action points for addressing the issue should where possible be agreed between the LWR and the Principal. Staff should be informed of the outcome.

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

Glossary of Terms

- **COVID-19 Response Plan:** plan designed to support the staff and BOM/ ETB in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the school environment. The plan details the policies and practices necessary for a school to meet the Return to Work Safely Protocol, the Department of Education plan for school reopening and to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in the school environment. COVID-19 Response Plans for 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.
- **Return to Work 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 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)	Is this control in place?	Action/to do list/outstanding controls <small>*Risk rating applies to outstanding</small>	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		<i>Examples of Actions</i> 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	Name of staff member	
Entrance Ramp	y	Fall	H	Yes			Kevin Gough	

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: / /

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 <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Date of Visit	— / — — / —	Time	Entry to school __ am <input type="checkbox"/> pm <input type="checkbox"/>	Exit from School _____ am <input type="checkbox"/> pm <input type="checkbox"/>		
Visitor Status	C o n t r a c t o r <input type="checkbox"/>	Parent/Guardian <input type="checkbox"/>			Other <input type="checkbox"/> Please complete: _____	
Contact details of visitor	C o m p a n y N					

a m e (i f a p p li c a b l e)	
A d d r e s s	
C o n t a c t N o . .	E
R e a s o	

	n f o r V i s i t	
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	

