



***Jesus & Mary Secondary School  
Gortnor Abbey  
2020/2021  
Version 5: 6th September 2021***

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

***Introduction:***

A revision of the COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable operation of Post Primary Schools is necessary to ensure that it is in compliance with the Government's Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19 and the 'Work Safely Protocol' which has been developed by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and the Department of Health with guidance documents provided by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA).

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

This Plan has been developed in line with public health advice issued by the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HSPC) and in compliance with the "**Return to Work Safely Protocols**".

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

This document focuses on the practical steps which have been taken in ***Jesus & Mary Secondary School*** to minimise the risk of infection at any time.

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

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

In line with the Return to Work Safety 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, students and parents.

The assistance and cooperation of all staff, students, 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.

***Should errors or omissions be identified, please notify us so that appropriate measures can be taken to rectify them.***

### **School COVID-19 Policy**

A COVID-19 policy outlines the commitment of the school to implement the plan and help prevent the spread of the virus. The policy will be signed and dated by the chairperson of the BOM and principal and brought to the attention of the staff, students, parents and others. Schools must have a COVID-19 policy in place prior to the reopening of schools for the **2021/2022** school year.

- ***The COVID-19 Policy Statement for this school was signed by the Board Of Management on the 13th August 2020.***

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

The BOM 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.

**The following are the steps we have taken as school to facilitate the reopening of our school:**

- The school is up to date with public health advice, changes to any Government plans for the safe reopening of society and Department of Education updates;
- Information was passed on in a timely manner to staff, students, parents and others as required.
  - ***The Department of Education and Skills training videos for returning to school were emailed to all staff on Wednesday 19th August and a reminder email was sent on Tuesday 25th August 2020.***
  - ***All new members of the teaching staff were emailed the training videos on Monday 23rd August 2021.***
  - ***The SNA training videos were emailed to all SNA's on Monday 23rd August 2021.***
- The school have asked all staff to confirm they have reviewed the training materials provided by the Department of Education.
  - ***A document was shared with all staff to sign to confirm they had watched the required videos. All staff must sign this document before Tuesday 8th September 2020.***
- Provided staff with access to the Return to Work (RTW) form.
  - 2020:**
    - ***The Pre-Return to Work Questionnaire COVID-19 was emailed to all staff on Wednesday 5th August 2020.***
  - 2021:**
    - ***The Pre-Return to Work Questionnaire COVID-19 was emailed to all staff on 23rd August 2021.***
- Identified 2 Lead Worker Representatives:
  - ***Ms. Sharon Hughes and Mr. Michael Murphy***
    - ***2020 - 2021***
    - ***2021 - 2022***
- Displayed posters and other signage to prevent introduction and spread of COVID-19
- Made the necessary changes to the school layout to support the redesign of classrooms to support physical distancing.
- Removed unnecessary clutter to facilitate ongoing cleaning of the school but took into account the importance of having educational materials to create a stimulating learning environment
- Updated the health and safety risk assessment. Mr Conor Jamseon requested a detailed breakdown of what was addressed before coming to the school

- ***This was sent to Mr Jameson on Thursday 17th September 2020***
- Made necessary arrangements to restrict access to the school and maintain records of contacts to the school
- Reviewed the school buildings to check the following:
  - ***Does the water system need flushing at outlets following low usage to prevent Legionella disease*** **Yes**
  - ***Has school equipment and mechanical ventilation been checked for signs of deterioration or damage before being used again***
  - ***Bin collections and other essential services resumed.*** **Yes**

## **Induction Training**

- ❖ All staff will undertake and complete COVID-19 Induction Training prior to returning to the school building.
  - ***The Department of Education and Skills training videos for returning to school were emailed to all staff on Wednesday 19th August and a reminder email was sent on Tuesday 25th August 2020.***
  - ***A document was shared with all staff to sign to confirm they had watched the required videos. All staff must sign this document before Tuesday 8th September 2020.***
  - ***All new members of the teaching staff were emailed the training videos on Monday 23rd August 2021.***
  - ***The new teaching staff attended a COVID-19 Information presentation with Ms Sharon Hughes on Wednesday, 25th August during their induction. The school COVID-19 protocols were explained and a COVID-19 Information document was shared with all new staff.***
  
- ❖ 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

- ***Through the use of email, staff meetings and LWR 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.***
- ***All JMB Bulletins have been shared with the LWR during 2020/2021 and again in 2021/2022***
- 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. and the LWR

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

- In order to return to the workplace, all staff were emailed and asked to complete a Return to Work (RTW) form.
  - 2020/2021**
    - ***The Pre-Return to Work Questionnaire COVID-19 was emailed to all staff on Wednesday 5th August 2020.***
    - ***A RTW form was completed and returned 3 days before all staff returned to work.***
    - ***On receipt of the completed form the Principal provided details of the Induction Training for completion by staff prior to the return to the workplace 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.***
  - 2021/2022**
    - ***The Pre-Return to Work Questionnaire COVID-19 was emailed to all staff on Monday 23rd August 2021.***
    - ***A RTW form was completed and returned 3 days before all staff returned to work.***
- 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.
  - The details of TC 0021/2021 set out temporary arrangements for parental leave, unpaid leave, teachers categorised as being in the “High Risk” category, teachers over 60 years of age and pregnant

teachers. "Department of Education, April 2021". This information has been shared with all staff.

- All staff have been asked to complete the Return to Work Questionnaire via Google Forms no later than Friday April 9th, 2021.
- All students have been asked to complete the Return to Education Facility Parental Declaration Form and return to the LWR no later than Friday April 9th, 2021.

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

The list of people in very high risk groups can be found in the COVID-19 Response Plan for safe and sustainable reopening of Post Primary Schools, V2 August 2020.

### **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.
  - ***An email was sent to all staff on Wednesday, 5th August 2020, regarding the appointment of two Lead Worker Representatives.***
  - ***Two nominees expressed interest in the post and were appointed as the Lead Worker Representatives in the school. Ms. Sharon Hughes & Mr. Michael Murphy.***
- This section sets out how the provisions will operate in respect of schools. These arrangements will operate for the 2020/21 & 2021/2022 school year and will be kept under review.
- Responsibility for the development and implementation of the COVID-19 Response Plan and the associated control measures lies with the Board of Management and school management.

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

- If a staff member has any concerns or observations in relation to the COVID-19 Response Plan, control measures or the adherence to such measures by staff, students or others, they should contact the LWR who will engage with school management.
  - **01/09/2020**  
***A Google Document was shared with all staff so each could record concerns. The concerns will be addressed by the Lead Worker Representatives and a response will be given to each concern.***
  - ❖ **01/09/2021**
    - ***All staff will contact the LWR via email - [lwr@gortnorabbey.ie](mailto:lwr@gortnorabbey.ie) The concerns will be addressed by the Lead Worker Representatives and a response will be given to each concern.***
  
- The role of LWR is separate to that of the Safety Representative under the health and safety legislation. However the Safety Representative may act as the LWR if selected to do so by the staff.
- In summary, the role of the LWR is to:
  - Represent all staff in the workplace regardless of role, and be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of different staff cohorts;
  - Keep up to date with the latest COVID-19 public health advice;
  - Work collaboratively with school management to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19;
  - Consult with school management on the control measures required to minimise the risk of staff and students being exposed to COVID-19;
  - Promote good hygiene practices, in conjunction with school management, such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette along with maintaining social distancing in accordance with public health advice;
  - Assist school management with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID19 in the workplace in line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol and current public health advice;
  - Monitor, in conjunction with school management, adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19;
  - Conduct reviews of safety measures that are in place to address and suppress COVID19 in the workplace.
  - Reviews (including an examination of the workplace) should be conducted on a regular basis (at least twice per week);

- Report any issues of concern immediately to school management and keep records of such issues and actions taken to rectify them;
- Consult with the school management on the school's COVID-19 Response Plan in the event of someone developing COVID-19 while in school including the location of an isolation area and a safe route to that area;
- Following any incident, assess with the school management any follow up action that is required;
- Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace; Make representations to school management on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.
- 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 other s/he should contact the LWR/s who will engage with the Principal.

Names of Lead Work Representatives:	Contact Details:
<i>Ms. Sharon Hughes</i>	<i>LWR@gortnorabbey.ie</i>
<i>Mr. Michael Murphy</i>	<i>LWR@gortnorabbey.ie</i>

### Signage

- The school has displayed signage outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene.
- The school has displayed posters in prominent areas such as offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilets.
- Direction Arrows put in place the week beginning **14th Sept. 2020** to facilitate ease of movement
- Adequate signage is in place for the school year 2021/2022
- Canteen setting marked to facilitate social distancing
- Each classroom has a poster which identifies the protocol in place if a student informs the teacher that they have any COVID-19 symptoms, see Appendix. 4

### Making Changes to School Layout

- Maintaining physical distancing in the school environment is recommended as one of the key control measures to minimize the risk of the introduction and spread of COVID-19.
- The school was required to reconfigure classrooms and other areas to support physical distancing in line with the guidance in advance of school reopening. This reconfiguration has been completed. Please see ***Framework for maintaining Physical Distancing ...***



- *In September 2021, a new pedestrian crossing & traffic management plan was implemented at the front of the school to help maintain social distancing.*

### **Health and Safety Risk Assessment**

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment.

It is important that the school reviews the emergency procedures involving, fire safety, first aid, accidents and dangerous occurrences to consider any new risks that arise due to the school's COVID-19 Response Plan.

Any changes to the schools existing emergency procedures will be documented and incorporated into the school's safety statement.

The school will review their existing risk assessments to consider any new risks that arise due to the school's COVID-19 Response Plan.

Any changes to the school's current risk assessments will be documented and will be incorporated into the schools statement.

### **First Aid/emergency procedure**

The standard First Aid/emergency procedure shall continue to apply in this school. In an emergency or in case of a serious incident, the school will call for an ambulance or the fire brigade on 112/999 giving details of location and type of medical incident.

***Additional First Aid Training will be offered to those qualified in First Aid on Friday 25th September 2020***

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

- Access to the school building will be in line with agreed school procedures.
- Arrangement for necessary visitors such as contractors and parents will be restricted to essential purposes and limited to those who have obtained prior approval from the principal.
- The Department of Education Inspectorate may also need to visit schools and centres for education to support them as appropriate in the implementation of public health advice relating to creating a safe learning and working environment for all.
- The prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a crucial step in restricting the spread of the virus and protecting the health and

safety of the individuals themselves and other staff, contractors and visitors at the workplace.

- A detailed sign in/sign out log of those entering the school facilities should be maintained.
- The school maintains a log of staff and students contacts.

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 the school in their role as data controller.

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

One of the key messages to manage the risks of COVID-19 is to do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into the school. If infection is not introduced it cannot be spread.

- The risk of spreading the infection once introduced exists in all interpersonal interactions; student - student, teacher - teacher and teacher- student, and must be managed in all settings.
- A range of essential control measures have been implemented to reduce the risk of the spread of COVID -19 virus and to protect the safety, health and welfare of staff, students, 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, students, 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;
- Advise staff and students that have symptoms not to attend school, to phone their doctor and to follow HSE guidance on self-isolation;

- Advise staff and students not to attend school if they have been identified by the HSE as contact for a person with COVID-19 and to follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement;
- Advise staff and students who develop symptoms at school to bring this to the attention of the principal (or deputy principal if the principal is unavailable) promptly;
- Ensure that staff and students know the protocol for managing a suspected case of COVID-19 in school;
- Advise everyone entering the school building that they need to perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser;
- Advise all relevant parties that visitors to the school during the day should be by prior arrangement with the principal and should be received at a specific contact point
- Physical distancing of 2 metres should be maintained between staff and visitors where possible.

#### **Carbon Dioxide Monitors:**

- The school received 10 Carbon Dioxide Monitors in September 2021 and are awaiting more monitors to arrive.
- Carbon dioxide monitors measure the quality of air in a room and allow staff to quickly identify where ventilation needs to be improved. Letting fresh air into indoor spaces can help remove air that contains virus particles and is important in preventing the spread of Covid-19.

#### **Know the symptoms of COVID-19**

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms. They are:

- *High temperature*
- *Cough*
- *Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties*
- *Loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste*

#### **Respiratory Hygiene**

- It is important that good respiratory hygiene is practised in the school. 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**

- Staff and students should understand why hand hygiene is important as well as when and how to wash their hands.
- The school is promoting good hygiene and has displayed posters throughout the schools on how to wash your hands.
- Hand hygiene can be achieved by hand washing or use of a hand sanitiser (when hands look clean).
- The hand hygiene facilities are being managed throughout the school.
- Hand sanitiser dispensers have been deployed at exit and entry points of schools and classrooms and care has been taken to clean up any hand sanitizer spills to prevent risks of falls.
- Warm water is available at all wash basins throughout the school.
- Hand washing facilities will be maintained in good condition and supplies of soap and towels will be topped up regularly to encourage everyone to use them.
- Laminated posters displaying hand washing techniques and promoting hand washing have been placed on walls adjacent to washing facilities.

**Frequency of Hand Hygiene Students 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.

- *The Lead Worker Representatives emailed all of the teaching staff a video, “**how to wash your hands properly**” on Thursday 3rd September 2020 to show their students.*

***Information received from the Department of Education:***

*The Lead Worker Representatives spoke to an advisor in the Department of Education & Skills yesterday regarding these questions and we were given the following information:*

- *The use of disposable gloves in the school setting by pupils or teachers is not appropriate. It 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. **Washing or use of hand sanitiser on gloved hands is not appropriate.***
- *Staff and pupils should adhere to public health guidelines and hand hygiene.*
- ***There is no requirement for handouts to be put in a box for 72 hours.***

**See below:**

- *On soft, porous surfaces: COVID-19 can survive on porous surfaces like cardboard, paper, clothing and soft furnishings like pillows and Doonas for up to 24 hours.*
- *Porous surfaces allow air and water to pass through, which makes them much less likely to hold infectious volumes of the virus compared to non-porous objects like door handles, taps and phone covers.*
- *On hard, shiny surfaces: COVID-19 has been proven to stay active on hard surfaces like glass, plastic and stainless steel for up to 72 hours. Hard, shiny materials are non-porous which means water, air and vapour cannot pass through and instead rest*

**Information Source: Department of Education & Skills, Monday 7th September 2020.**

## **Physical Distancing**

- Physical distancing has been applied in this post primary school setting allowing for some flexibility when needed.
- *It has been applied in a practical way to recognise that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on this issue.*
- Care was taken to avoid generating tension or potential conflict and some flexibility in the implementation of measures may be required at time.
- It is also recognised that it is not always possible for staff to maintain physical distance from students and it is not appropriate that they would always be expected to do so where this could have a detrimental impact on the student.
- *However where possible staff should maintain a minimum of 1 m 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.*

## **Increasing Separation:**

It has been applied in a practical way to recognise that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on this issue.

Physical distancing of 2m where possible between staff and students and at least 1m where possible, will be maintained between desks or between individual students.

- For the academic year 2021/2022, teachers have been assigned a base class and will remain in their classroom, with students moving between rooms
- Double classes are planned to minimise movement during the day.
- For elective subjects students will move quickly into the new class and will be seated close to members of their base - class cohort, observing as much physical distance as possible.

- Hand washing and/or sanitising will be required when moving between classes by teachers and students.
- Physical distancing between the teacher and class will be observed.
- Social physical contact (hand to hand greetings) will be discouraged.
- Where students need to move about within the classroom to perform activities (access to a shared resource) it will be organized to the greatest degree possible to minimise congregation at the shared resource.
- Staff and students should avoid sharing personal items.
- Where teaching and learning involves use of keyboards or tablets, the contact surface of the device should be cleaned regularly and hand hygiene encouraged.

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

- School drop off/collection Arrangements for dropping off/collecting students should be arranged to maintain physical distancing of 2m where possible.
- Walking/cycling to school should be encouraged as much as possible.
- Aim of any arrangements is to avoid a congregation of people at the school gates where physical distancing requirements may not be respected.
- Students should head straight to their designated learning space/classroom.

### **For the school year 2021/2022 there will be no staggered breaks**

### **Making Changes to the Year Group Areas**

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

- All year groups have designated areas both inside and outside, where they can eat their lunch
- New movement protocols within the school at break and between classes

### **Canteen**

- Ensure physical distancing is applied in canteen facilities
  - Implement a queue management system.
  - The canteen has set up an other area to distribute food, this will avoid queues at break & lunch times
- Students will clean their hands before and after entering the canteen area.

## Staff

- **At the staff meeting on Thursday 25th March, 2021, all staff were spoken to about good hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette & physical distance while in the staff room.**
- A distance of 2m is recommended for physical distancing by staff. This is particularly relevant to distancing between adults when they are not engaged in teaching such as the staff room and arriving to work.
- If 2m cannot be maintained in staff groups, as much as distance as is possible and updated guidance on face covering should be observed.
- At post primary level consideration could be given to formation of staff “pods” or teams who work together and take breaks together.
- 2020/2021: Staff meetings should be held remotely or in small groups or in large spaces to facilitate physical distancing. Implement no hand shaking policy.
- 2021/2022: The staff meeting was held in the Gym where physical distancing was possible
- Minimise gathering at the beginning or end of the school day.
- Agreed by the BOM on the 23rd June 2021, all staff will remain in their own classrooms during the 2022/22 school year
- All staff were emailed on Wednesday 8th September, 2021 to ensure that they have stickers on the tables in their classroom. A seating arrangement document must be completed. The number on the table must correspond with the number on the document for Contact Tracing. All staff were asked to return their seating arrangements to the office no later than Friday 10th September, 2021.

## Use of PPE in Schools

- The updated advice from the HPSC to the Department of Education has recommended that face coverings should be worn by staff members where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres from other staff, parents, essential visitors or pupils.
- The Department has accepted this recommendation. Accordingly, it is now a requirement for face coverings to be worn by staff members where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres from other staff, parents, essential visitors or pupils.
  - ***All staff members were given a Visor on their return to work, Wednesday 26th August, 2020.***
- PPE will also need to be used at certain work activities or work areas. These might include roles such as:

- Performing intimate care
- Where a suspected case of COVID-19 is identified while the school is in operation
- Where staff are particularly vulnerable to infection but are not in the list of those categorised as people in very high risk groups, or may be living with people who are in a very high risk category;
- Administering first aid
- Parent Teacher meetings
- All students were given a COVID-19 Information presentation during their online assemblies before the Easter Break, on PPE & their safe return to school by the LWR. All students returned to school on Monday 12th April, 2021.
- All students were given a COVID-19 Information presentation during their online assemblies before they returned to school, on PPE & their safe return to school by the LWR. All students returned to school from Friday 27th August 2021 - Tuesday 7th September 2021.

**The following information in relation to the wearing of masks was received from the Joint Managerial Body (JMB) on September 17th, 2020.**

***Exemptions***

- ***A medical certificate to certify that a person falls into a category listed below must be provided to the school by, or on behalf of, any person (staff or student) who claims that they are covered by the exemptions below:***
  - *any person with difficulty breathing who cannot wear a cloth face covering or a visor*
  - *any person who is unable to remove the cloth face-covering or visor without assistance*
  - *any person who has special needs and who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the cloth face covering or visor, for example persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, sensory concerns or tactile sensitivity.*

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

- ***The Department has also issued the following clarification regarding the physical distancing requirement when a face covering, supported by a medical certificate, cannot be worn:***



- *The view is that there will be a very small number who are covered by the limited exceptions who cannot wear a cloth face covering or visor and that in these limited circumstances the arrangements in place for physical distancing (1m), hand hygiene, cough etiquette and cleaning would apply and should be strictly observed.*

## **Reception**

Consideration was given to the use of Perspex in reception areas where it is not possible for staff to maintain a physical distance of 2m from other staff or students.

## **Masks/Face Coverings**

- Cloth face coverings act as a barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from travelling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the face covering coughs, sneezes, talks or raises their voice.
- Cloth face coverings are therefore intended to prevent transmission of the virus from the wearer (who may not know that they are infected) to those with whom they come into close contact. It is therefore a requirement that teachers, staff and students attending post primary schools wear a face covering when a physical distance of 2m from other staff or students cannot be maintained.
- In certain situations the use of clear visors should be considered, for example staff interacting with students with hearing difficulties or learning difficulties.
- Cloth face coverings should not be worn by any of the following groups:
  - Any person with difficulty breathing
  - Any person who is unconscious or incapacitated
  - Any person who is unable to remove the face-covering without assistance
  - Any person who has special needs and who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the face covering, for example persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, sensory concerns or tactile sensitivity.
  - All staff and students wearing face coverings should be reminded to not touch the face covering and to wash or sanitise their hands (using hand sanitiser) before putting on and after taking off the face covering.
- All teachers and staff should be aware that they should wash or sanitize hands (using a hand sanitizer) before and after helping a student put on or adjust a face covering.
- Cloth face coverings should be washed after every day of use and/or before being used again, or if visibly soiled.
- Face coverings should not be worn if they are wet. A wet cloth face covering may make it difficult to breathe.

- The school has additional disposable face coverings available for students, teachers, and staff in the office in case a back-up face covering is needed during the day.
- Wearing a face covering or mask does not negate the need to stay at home if symptomatic.

## Gloves

- The use of disposable gloves in the school by students or staff is ***not generally appropriate*** but may be necessary for matters such as cleaning, intimate care settings or when administering first aid.
- Routine use does not protect the wearer and may expose others to risk from contaminated gloves.
- Routine use of disposable gloves is not a substitute for hand hygiene.
- ***Gloves had been made available to all staff in this school. Gloves have been put in the four staff rooms in the school.***

### ***Information received from the Department of Education:***

- ***The use of disposable gloves in the school setting by pupils or teachers is not appropriate. It 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. Washing or use of hand sanitiser on gloved hands is not appropriate.***
- ***Staff and pupils should adhere to public health guidelines and hand hygiene.***
- ***There is no requirement for handouts to be put in a box for 72 hours.***

### **See below:**

- ***On soft, porous surfaces: COVID-19 can survive on porous surfaces like cardboard, paper, clothing and soft furnishings like pillows and Doonas for up to 24 hours.***
- ***Porous surfaces allow air and water to pass through, which makes them much less likely to hold infectious volumes of the virus compared to non-porous objects like door handles, taps and phone covers.***
- ***On hard, shiny surfaces: COVID-19 has been proven to stay active on hard surfaces like glass, plastic and stainless steel for up to 72 hours. Hard, shiny materials are non-porous which means water, air and vapour cannot pass through and instead rest***

## **Aprons**

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

## **Impact of COVID-19 on certain school activities**

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

- ***Extracurricular activities in the school can go ahead if face coverings are worn and social distancing is obeyed.***

## **Hygiene and Cleaning in Schools**

The specific advice in relation to school cleaning is set out in the HPSC advice and was covered in the induction training. This advice sets out the cleaning regime required to support schools to prevent COVID-19 infections and the enhanced cleaning required in the event of a suspected case of COVID-19

- The school setting should be cleaned at least once per day.
- Additional cleaning if available 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. All classrooms have a Sanitising Spray Mist & Blue Paper Towels
- There will be a regular collection of used waste disposal bags from offices and other areas within the school facility.
- 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.
- Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.).
- A toilet cleaning record will be maintained in each toilet throughout the school, see Appendix.2

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

- The rooms will be cleaned as soon as practicable possible.
- Once the room is vacated the room will not be reused until it has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry.
- Person/s assigned to cleaning should avoid touching their face while they are cleaning and household gloves and a plastic apron.
- Clean the environment and furniture using disposable cleaning cloths and a household detergent followed by disinfection with a chlorine based product (household bleach).
- Special attention will be given to frequently touched surfaces, the back of chairs, couches, door handles and any surfaces that are visibly soiled with body fluids.
- Once the room has been cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry, the room can be reused.
- A cleaning checklist will be maintained by the cleaning staff, see Appendix. 3

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

- ***Staff or students should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of COVID-19.***
- The following outlines how a school should deal with a suspected case that may arise in a school setting.
  - Management will bring the suspected case to the appropriate isolation area
  - Six designated isolation areas have been identified within the school building.
  - The designated isolation area is behind a closed door and away from other staff and students.
  - If a staff member/student displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school the following are the procedures to be implemented:
    - If the person with the suspected case is a student, the parents/guardians should be contacted immediately;
    - Isolate the person and have a procedure in place to accompany the individual to the designated isolation area via the isolation route, keeping at least 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;
    - The isolation area does not have to be a room but if it is not a room it should be 2m away from others in the room;

- If it is not possible to maintain a distance of 2m a staff member caring for a student should wear a face covering or mask. Gloves should not be used as the virus does not pass through skin;
- Provide a mask for the person presenting with symptoms He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises;
- Assess whether the individual who is displaying symptoms can immediately be directed to go home/be brought home by parents and call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home;
- Facilitate the person presenting with symptoms remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and facilitate them calling their doctor.
- The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects.
- Advice should be given to the person presenting with symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bag provided;
- If the person is well enough to go home, arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible and advise them to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used;
- If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a COVID-19 suspect; Carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery;
- Appropriate cleaning will be carried out in the isolation area and work areas after the person leaves this area
- Please refer to Circular 0046/2020 for further information on operational supports that will be made available to post primary schools to fully and safely reopen in a sustainable way while minimising risk associated with COVID-19.
- The Isolation Safety Report must be completed by Management when a person enters the Isolation Room See Appendix.1

## **Staff Duties**

Staff have a statutory obligation to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of their colleagues and other parties. The cooperation and assistance of all staff is essential to reduce the risk of spread of COVID19 and to protect health and safety as far as possible within the school. All staff have a key role to play.

In this regard and in order to facilitate a safe return to work, these duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

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

## **COVID-19 related absence management**

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

## **Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme**

The Department recognises the need for school staff wellbeing and collective selfcare. 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.

## Appendices:

### Appendix 1:

#### Isolation Room Safety Report

<b>Name:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Person in contact:</b>		<b>Isolation Room No:</b>	
<b>Collected By:</b>		<b>Time of Collection:</b>	
<b>Symptoms displayed: Please tick</b>		<b>Follow the protocol and tick:</b>	
Fever		Window opened for ventilation	
Cough		Advice given to cover mouth, dispose of tissue in the bin	
Breathlessness		Mask provided to exit the building	
Loss of smell/taste		HSE Guidelines provided	
Other symptoms displayed: Please tick			
Runny Nose			
Headache			
Flu like symptoms			
Other: please state			

#### Cleaning of Isolation Room

<b>Surfaces wiped down with disinfectant</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Door Handle</li><li>2. Furniture</li><li>3. Light Switch</li></ol>	
<b>Bin emptied into hazard waste bin</b>	

Follow up call will be scheduled for

\_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_

Person completing this form: \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix:2



### COVID-19 Toilet Cleaning Record 2020/2021



Toilet No. \_\_\_\_\_ Toilet Area: \_\_\_\_\_ Frequency: \_\_\_\_\_

Week Commencing: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:	Time:	Cleaned By:	Initials

*\*Please change weekly and add to the cleaning folder.*

**Appendix: 3**



**Cleaning Checklist 2020/2021**



**Week Commencing:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Item</b>	<b>Mon</b>	<b>Tue</b>	<b>Wed</b>	<b>Thur</b>	<b>Fri</b>	<b>Signed</b>
Desk/Chairs cleaned						
All dispensers wiped down						
Door handles and window sills cleaned						
Window handles cleaned						
Sinks and toilets cleaned and wiped down						
Floors brushed and mopped						
Outside door handles cleaned						
Cupboard handles cleaned						
Tops of radiators wiped down						
Sink and draining areas cleaned						
Empty bins (bags), wipe down bins and replace bags General waste bins each day Recycling bins when necessary PPE bins weekly						
Carpets, mats and rugs vacuumed.						
Outside classroom door handles wiped						

*\*Please change weekly and add to the cleaning folder.*

## ***Students who become unwell in class***

**All staff must have their mobile phone with them at all times.**

**If a student informs the class teacher that they are feeling unwell and displaying Covid-19 symptoms, the teacher must:**

- ***Ring 096-31194*** immediately ( or send a student to the office) to informing them that a student is unwell and can't remain in class
- The teacher must give their name, room no. and year group. ***Please do not mention the student's name over the phone.***
- The teacher has no physical contact with this student. The student must remain in their seat, wearing their mask until the assigned person arrives at the classroom. They will then leave the classroom and proceed to the Office where a member of management will take them to the Isolation Room.
- Class continues as normal.
- The Office Staff will contact the student's Parent/Guardian and arrange for them to go home.
- If a student is displaying ***symptoms of general sickness***, the teacher will ask them are they able to go directly to the Office on their own, if not, please **Ring 096-31194**

**Common symptoms of coronavirus include:**

- ***a fever*** (high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above)
- ***a cough*** - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry
- ***shortness of breath*** or breathing difficulties
- loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – or things smell or taste different to normal



