



Coláiste Gleann Lí COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of School

Note; This is a dynamic, living document and subject to change due to Department guidelines, public health advice and experience on the ground.

Signed: _____ (Cllr. Terry O'Brien)

Date: _____

Signed: _____ (Mr. Richard Lawlor)

Date: _____



Coláiste Gleann Lí

COVID-19 Policy Statement

Coláiste Gleann Lí is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our staff and a safe learning environment for all our students. To ensure that, we have developed the following COVID-19 Response Plan. The BOM/ETB 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 students 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 in relation to summer provision
- inform all staff and students of essential hygiene and respiratory etiquette and physical distancing requirements
- adapt the school to facilitate physical distancing as appropriate in line with the public health guidance and direction of the Department of Education
- keep a contact log to help with contact tracing
- ensure staff and students 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 students 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 Representatives, who will be supported in line with the agreement between the Department and education partners.

Signed: _____ (Cllr. Terry O'Brien)

Date: _____

Signed: _____ (Mr. Richard Lawlor)

Date: _____

Table of Contents:

- 1) Introduction
- 2) What is a School COVID-19 Response Plan?
- 3) School COVID-19 Policy
- 4) Planning and Preparing for Return to School
 - 4.1) Induction Training
 - 4.2) Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)
 - 4.3) Lead Worker Representative (LWR)
 - 4.4) Display signage
 - 4.5) Making changes to school layout
 - 4.6) Update Safety and Risk Assessment
 - 4.7) Access to the School and Contact Log
- 5) Control Measures – To prevent Introduction and Spread of COVID-19 in Schools
 - 5.1) Know the Symptoms of COVID-19
 - 5.2) Respiratory Hygiene
 - 5.3) Hand Hygiene
 - 5.4) Physical Distancing
 - 5.5) Use of PPE in Schools
- 6) Impact of COVID-19 on certain school activities
- 7) Hygiene and Cleaning in School
- 8) Dealing with a suspected case
- 9) Staff Duties
- 10) Absence Management
- 11) Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

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 post primary schools.

1) Introduction

This Response Plan has been developed in line with “The Roadmap for the Full Return to School” published by Minister for Education in July. It sets out what the operation of school will look like and the range of supports which will be available in a COVID-19 context.

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.

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 www.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 (BOM)/Education Training Board (ETB) 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 that will aim 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 schools complies with the public health advice and guidance documents prepared by the Department. Doing so minimises the risk to students, staff and others. The response plan supports the sustainable reopening of school where the overriding objective is to protect the health of staff and students while promoting the educational and development needs of the children in the school. The COVID-19 response plan is a living document and will be updated in line with the public health advice and any other relevant agreement with education partners as appropriate for post primary 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/ETB, staff, students and parents.

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

3) School COVID-19 Policy

A COVID-19 policy outlines the commitment of Coláiste Gleann Lí to implement the plan and help prevent the spread of the virus. Our School COVID-19 policy for 2020/21 can be found *above*.

4) Planning and Preparing for Return to School

4.1) 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/ETB.

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.

Link- [Details of the training, can be found here.](#)

A national information campaign to support parents and students 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.

Student Induction- At Coláiste Gleann Lí year group assemblies at the beginning of term and an induction booklet will be given to students/ parents to show what changes they will experience in the new school year. This induction booklet also details;

1. Current information and where I can access
2. Changed school policies and procedures
3. How to protect my classmates and school community
4. How to wash/sanitise your hands correctly
5. Correct respiratory hygiene
6. What to do if you have symptoms
7. The importance of social distancing
8. Cleaning their own belongings, desk/ workspace and keeping it tidy
9. Correct fitting, removal, storage and disposal of P.P.E, including how to wear a mask correctly
10. A suspected case

Parents will also be informed of new procedures when dropping their child off at school, the importance of visiting by appointment only and the importance of familiarising themselves with this response plan.

The importance of students following the correct procedures and guidelines is reflected in the changes to our Code of Behaviour. Both students and parents should familiarise themselves with these updates. Our Code of Behaviour is available on the school website.

Returning to school will be a difficult transition for some of our student cohort and supporting them will be crucial as they navigate school again. Our Guidance Counsellor, HSCL, Student Support Team and SEN Team will be best placed to put supports in action.

Our Student Support Team will identify students and their parents/guardians most in need of support. The SEN Team will work on supporting students with special educational needs, English as an additional language (EAL) or additional learning needs. Moreover, students at risk of educational disadvantage, and students with medical issues sensitive to the pandemic context, are particularly vulnerable and will continue to need targeted support.

4.2) 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.

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

On receipt of the completed form the principal will provide 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.

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**.

Link- [**People at very high risk \(extremely vulnerable\)**](#):

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

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

The advice for this group is available from the HSE. Details of the 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.

4.3) Lead Worker Representative

The protocol provides for the appointment of a Lead Worker Representative (LWR) in each workplace. The LWR will work in collaboration with the employer to assist in the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of COVID -19 and monitor adherence to those measures and to be involved in communicating the health advice around COVID-19 in the workplace.

This section sets out how the provisions will operate in respect of schools. These arrangements will operate for the 2020/21 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/ 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 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.

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 COVID-19 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 COVID-19 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 LWRs who will engage with the Principal/ETB.

Names of Lead Worker Representatives:	Contact details:
Mr. Michael O’Sullivan	m.osullivan@gleannli.ie
Ms. Myrna Egan	m.egan@gleannli.ie

All staff, students, 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.

4.4) **Signage**

Coláiste Gleann Lí has displayed signage outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene along with physical distancing. The posters/ floormarkings are age appropriate and display appropriate key health messages – hand washing, sneeze and cough etiquette etc. Floor markings also include directional arrows for movement in corridors. Signage at entrance outlines protocols for parents/ visitors and that it is strictly by appointment only.

Link- [Department Signage.](#)

4.5) **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. Coláiste Gleann Lí has worked to reconfigure classrooms and other areas to support physical distancing in line with the guidance in advance of school reopening in the following ways;

- Keep left and Single file movement on all corridors with the centre of the corridors marked and arrows to denote correct directional movement.
- A minimum of 1 metre between students in classrooms and in canteen/dining areas.
- Single Tables will be used in all general classrooms (Due to arrive in Mid- September until then a mixture of single and double tables being used)
- Teachers desk have a clear counter screen guard of 1m x 1m to protect them while teaching.
- Larger class groups are timetabled in the larger classrooms when needed.
- Timetable reviewed to keep students in base rooms as much as possible.

- Two designated entry points to reduce contact of students/ staff and staggered arrival times for students
- Staggered break and lunchtimes to reduce volume of people and traffic, along with an additional dining area set-up.
- Max of 3 students in the main toilets at any one time, with Queue markings outside the door.
- Dedicated stalls in main bathrooms for year groups, and some sinks cordoned off to allow physical distancing, along with floor markings at urinals.
- Visitors by appointment only.
- Hand sanitiser at all entry and exit points as well as outside each classroom and in the general and corridor areas.
- Hand sanitiser and cleaning point in all classrooms with disinfectant sprays/Wipes/Towels and a dedicated pedal bin for Covid-19 related waste.
- Maximum of 16 people in the staffroom at any one time.
- Entry points to school Mag locked and operational only with electronic Fob. Students that arrive late will buzz into main office to gain access.
- Queue markings in areas of congregation before entering classrooms.
- Students remain in the Base class Grouping/Pod for duration of the day. In option subjects students are seating in proximity to their base class.
- Students will have assigned and dedicated seats in classrooms and dining areas to help with contact tracing.
- Removal of locker use to allow for greater social distancing and to prevent crowds gathering.
- In classrooms unnecessary and additional storage has been removed to allow greater social distancing.
- At mealtimes students do not need to queue as meals are pre-prepared.
- Cashless payment system will be in use by the canteen.
- Additional Staff workroom with PC's / internet access.
- On the students PE day they will wear their PE gear/tracksuit to remove the need for changing in school and use of changing rooms to help maintain social distancing. This measure will also provide for a further opportunity for Parents to wash their child's school uniform.

4.6) Health and Safety Risk Assessment

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment. Coláiste Gleann Lí's risk assessment to identify the control measures required to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 in school settings is available from the school office.

First Aid/emergency procedure

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

4.7) Access to School and Contact Log

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.

A detailed sign in/sign out log of visitors entering the school is maintained at the school office in accordance with GDPR and the Data Protection. VsWare records attendance of students daily and teachers attendance is recorded in the contact log in the school office. The Coláiste Gleann Lí contact log is available from the school office. Students will have assigned and dedicated seats in classrooms and dining areas to help with contact tracing.

5) 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.

Government policy, which is based on official public health advice, continues to advise against non-essential travel overseas for everyone.

It is a requirement for anyone coming into Ireland, from locations other than those with a rating of 'normal precautions' ("green"), to restrict their movements for 14 days, and this includes school staff, parents and children or other students coming from abroad to attend school in Ireland. Restricting your movements means staying indoors in one location and avoiding contact with other people and social situations as much as possible.

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

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

- Advise staff and 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 that 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 (**details at Section 8**);
- 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.

5.1) **Know the Symptoms of COVID-19**

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

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

5.2) **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.

5.3) **Hand Hygiene**

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

Staff and students will be reminded regularly of the importance of good hand hygiene. There are posters displayed throughout the schools on how to wash your hands. The following link has been made available to all staff and students which details the HSE guidelines on handwashing:

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

Hand hygiene can be achieved by hand washing or use of a hand sanitiser (when hands look clean).

Use of hand hygiene facilities including wash hand basins needs to be managed so as to avoid congregation of people waiting to use wash hand basins and hand sanitisers. To allow social distancing some sinks are cordoned off.

Hand sanitiser dispensers can be deployed more readily at exit and entry points of schools and classrooms and care should be taken to clean up any hand sanitizer spills to prevent risks of falls.

Warm water is preferable to hot or cold water for hand washing but if the plumbing system only supplies cold water, a soap that emulsifies easily in cold water should be used.

Wash hand basins, running water, liquid soap and hand drying facilities are provided in all toilets, kitchens and any food preparation areas.

Hand washing facilities are maintained in good condition and supplies of soap and towels are topped up regularly by School cleaner to encourage everyone to use them.

Hot air dryers are an acceptable alternative for hand drying but must be regularly maintained. There is no evidence that hand dryers are associated with increased risk of transmission of COVID-19.

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

Hand sanitiser is suitable for use for hand hygiene when hands are not visibly soiled (look clean).

Evidence of effectiveness is best for alcohol based hand rubs but non-alcohol based hand rubs can be used too.

When hand rubs/gels are being used in school care should be taken to ensure that students do not ingest them as they are flammable and toxic.

Frequency of Hand Hygiene

Students and staff should perform hand hygiene:

- On arrival at school;
- Before eating or drinking;
- After using the toilet;
- After petting animals;
- After playing outdoors;
- When their hands are physically dirty;
- When they cough or sneeze.

5.4) Physical Distancing

Physical distancing can be usefully applied in a post primary school setting allowing for some flexibility when needed. It must be applied in a practical way to recognise that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on this issue. Care should be 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.

Physical distancing falls into two categories:

- Increasing separation
- Decreasing interaction

Increasing separation

Coláiste Gleann Lí has reviewed the *Framework to maintain Physical Distancing in the Classroom in Post Primary Schools with a full return of all Students for the 2020/21 School Year*. This has included the implementation of a suite measures to allow for greater social distancing.

Some of the measures set out in the Framework are:

1. Reconfigure class spaces to maximise physical distancing;
2. Utilising and reconfiguring all available space in the school in order to maximise physical distancing;
3. Review Timetables;
4. Reconfiguring Classes;
5. Consider Use of Live Streaming within the School; and
6. Accessing available spaces within the local community

Link- [*“Framework to maintain Physical Distancing in the Classroom in Post Primary Schools with a full return of all Students for the 2020/21 School Year”*](#).

In Coláiste Gleann Lí this means the following:

- Keep left and Single file movement on all corridors with the centre of the corridors marked and arrows to denote correct directional movement.
- A minimum of 1 metre between students in classrooms and in canteen/dining areas.
- Single Tables will be used in all general classrooms (Due to arrive in Mid- September until then a mixture of single and double tables being used)
- Teachers desk have a clear counter screen guard of 1m x 1m to protect them while teaching.
- Larger class groups are timetabled in the larger classrooms when needed.
- Timetable reviewed to keep students in base rooms as much as possible.
- Two designated entry points to reduce contact of students/ staff and staggered arrival times for students
- Staggered break and lunchtimes to reduce volume of people and traffic, along with an additional dining area set-up.
- Max of 3 students in the main toilets at any one time, with Queue markings outside the door.
- Dedicated stalls in main bathrooms for year groups, and some sinks cordoned off to allow physical distancing, along with floor markings at urinals.
- Visitors by appointment only.
- Hand sanitiser at all entry and exit points as well as outside each classroom and in the general and corridor areas.
- Hand sanitiser and cleaning point in all classrooms with disinfectant sprays/Wipes/Towels and a dedicated pedal bin for Covid-19 related waste.
- Maximum of 16 people in the staffroom at any one time.

- Entry points to school Mag locked and operational only with electronic Fob. Students that arrive late will buzz into main office to gain access.
- Queue markings in areas of congregation before entering classrooms.
- Students remain in the Base class Grouping/Pod for duration of the day. In option subjects students are seating in proximity to their base class.
- Students will have assigned and dedicated seats in classrooms and dining areas to help with contact tracing.
- Removal of locker use to allow for greater social distancing and to prevent crowds gathering.
- In classrooms unnecessary and additional storage has been removed to allow greater social distancing.
- At meal times students do not need to queue as meals are pre-prepared.
- Cashless payment system will be in use by the canteen.
- Additional Staff workroom with PC's / internet access.
- On the students PE day they will wear their PE gear/tracksuit to remove the need for changing in school and use of changing rooms to help maintain social distancing. This measure will also provide for a further opportunity for Parents to wash their child's school uniform.

Decreasing interaction

In Coláiste Gleann Lí physical distancing of 2m where possible or at least 1m is maintained between desks and between individual students and staff.

As far as possible and practical, students remain in the classroom and teachers move between rooms.

As far as possible and practical students are assigned to their main base class cohort in option subjects and in dining/ canteen areas.

Where students have an option subject they move quickly into the new class and are seated with members of their base class cohort, observing as much physical distance as possible.

Hand washing and/or sanitising is available on corridors and outside classrooms when moving between classes by teachers and students.

In class, Physical distancing between the teacher and class is observed. Teachers desk have a clear protective screen available.

Where movement of class groups between rooms is required it should be planned to minimise interaction with other class groups. To this end, morning starting times and breaktimes are staggered. The keep left and single file system also maintains a physical distance during movements.

Students will have assigned and dedicated seats in classrooms and dining areas to help with contact tracing.

Additional supervision is in place to limit interaction on arrival and departure and in hallways and other shared areas.

Lockers will no longer be available to students to prevent congregation and to maintain social distancing. Students should only bring essential books and copies each day to reduced bag weight.

Social physical contact (hand to hand greetings, hugs) is not allowed and there is a no hand shaking policy in place

Where students need to move about within the classroom to perform activities (access to a shared resource) it should be organized to the greatest degree possible to minimise congregation at the shared resource.

Staff and students should avoid sharing of personal items.

Where teaching and learning involves use of keyboards or tablets, the contact surface of the device will be cleaned regularly and hand hygiene encouraged.

Physical Distancing outside of the classroom and within the school

School drop off/collection

When dropping students off parents/guardians should remain in cars and observe social distancing guidelines.

Arrangements for dropping off/collecting students will be staggered to maintain physical distancing of 2m where possible.

Walking/cycling to school will be encouraged as much as possible.

Congregation of people at the school gates where physical distancing requirements may not be respected will be discouraged.

Staggered drop off/pick up times will be in place.

A second entry point will be used to prevent congregation.

Students that are not registered for breakfast club should head straight to their designated learning space/classroom at the beginning of the day.

Staff

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, the wearing of a face covering should be observed. All staff will be provided with face masks and face shields.

To prevent the congregation of staff, staggered break and lunchtimes are in place. As there is a limit of 16 people in the staffroom teachers may use their classroom for break times. The home economics room will be used during break times for additional tea making/ food preparation space.

Additional Staff workroom with PC's / internet access has been introduced to the curricular room.

Staff meetings will be held remotely.

Minimise gathering at the beginning or end of the school day.

Canteen

Physical distancing will be applied in canteen facilities and dining areas with a minimum of 1m between people.

Staggered canteen use and an additional dining area have been introduced to allow for physical distancing.

Floor markings have been introduced to managing queuing however, with the prepacked meals the need for queuing will be greatly reduced.

Students will be encouraged to use the hand sanitising stations to clean their hands before and after entering the canteen area.

Corridors and Stairwells

Briefly passing someone in a hall is very unlikely to contribute significantly to the spread of infection if people do not have physical contact and avoid informal group discussions. A keep left and single file system will be enforced.

5.5) Use of PPE in Schools

PPE in the form of face masks/ coverings will be required to be worn within school by staff and students where a 2 metre social distance cannot be maintained. 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. PPE should always be worn when:

- 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.

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

Masks/ Face coverings are to be worn by staff and students where a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained, such as in classrooms, moving from one class to another, corridors and at breaktimes/lunchtimes etc..

It is essential for those wearing a cloth face covering to understand that the purpose is not to protect themselves but to reduce onward transmission and the benefit is reliant on wearing the covering appropriately.

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

In certain circumstances where a student or staff member cannot wear a mask/ face covering for medical reasons a visor can be used if appropriate. You do not have to wear a face covering if you have an illness or impairment that would make wearing or removing a face covering upsetting or uncomfortable.

Wearing Masks or Face Coverings

The HPSC advice to the Department of Education states that

- *It is recommended that teachers, staff and students attending secondary schools wear a face covering when a physical distance of 2 metres 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.*

Masks are now a school uniform requirement for the duration of the COVID-19 Pandemic and parents are to provide at least 3 cloth masks/day for students at our school. Guidance on types of face coverings will be issued to parents.

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

- Primary school or pre-school children
- Any person with difficulty breathing
- Any person who is unconscious or incapacitated
- Any person who is unable to remove the face-covering without assistance
- Any person who has special needs and who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the face covering, for example persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, sensory concerns or tactile sensitivity.

While a face covering is likely to be a more effective barrier, in these scenarios a clear visor can be worn instead of a face covering.

In situations where 1 metre distance is hard to achieve, such as practical classes or where students and teachers need to move around the classroom, both a face covering and a face visor should be worn.

For teachers, a cloth face covering is required if physical distancing of 2 metres is not possible. The use of a visor as an alternative can be considered where a face covering makes communication difficult and/or a person cannot wear a mask for the reasons listed above.

It is essential for those wearing a cloth face covering to understand that the purpose is not to protect themselves but to reduce onward transmission and the benefit is reliant on wearing the covering appropriately.

Wearing a face covering or mask **does not** negate the need to stay at least 1 meter apart.

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

Link- [Advice on how to properly use face coverings can be found here.](#)

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 or 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.

6) 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.

Choir/Music Performance

Choir practices/performances and music practices/performances involving wind instruments may pose a higher level of risk and so wind instruments will not be used.

Sport Activities

Schools should refer to the HPSC guidance on Return to Sport.

Shared Equipment

Art – Where possible students should be encouraged to have their own individual art and equipment supplies.

Electronics – Shared electronic devices such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards should be cleaned between use and consideration could be given to the use of wipeable covers for electronics to facilitate cleaning.

Musical Equipment/Instruments – To the greatest extent possible, instruments should not be shared between students and if sharing is required, the instruments should be

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

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

7) Hygiene and Cleaning in Schools

The specific advice in relation to school cleaning is set out in the HPSC advice and will be 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 cases of COVID-19.

Particular care of the hygiene arrangements for wash hand and toilet facilities will be taken.

Coláiste Gleann Lí will be cleaned at **least once per day**. Additional cleaning will be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, hand rails, chairs/arm rests, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities.

With students moving between classrooms a selection of sprays/wipes/paper towels will be made available to them to enable them to wipe down their desk, chair and surface before leaving the room.

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.

There will be 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 bring, use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.).

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

The rooms should be cleaned as soon as practicable possible.

Once the room is vacated the room should not be reused until it has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry.

Disinfection only works on things that are clean. Therefore when disinfection is required it is always in addition to cleaning.

Person 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).

Pay special attention to frequently touched surfaces, the back of chairs, couches, door handles and any surfaces that are visibly soiled with body fluids.

Once the room has been cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry, the room can be reused.

8) 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 the school will deal with a suspected case that may arise.

The school meeting room is the designated isolation area that has been identified within the school building. If more than one person displaying signs of COVID-19 the curricular room will be used as a second isolation room. 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;
- Remember that the virus is spread by droplets and is not airborne so physical separation is enough to reduce the risk of spread to others even if they are in the same 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 if one is available. He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises;
- Assess whether the individual who is displaying symptoms can immediately be directed to go home/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;
- Arrange for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved – (**details at Section 7**)

The HSE will inform any staff/parents who have come into close contact with a diagnosed case via the contact tracing process. The HSE will contact all relevant persons where a diagnosis of COVID-19 is made. The instructions of the HSE should be followed and staff and student confidentiality is essential at all times.

***In the case of a symptomatic student the parent/ guardian will be contacted immediately and informed of the situation. If the student feels well enough to go home they should be collected from the school within 1 hour by the parent/ guardian.**

9) 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.

10) 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.

11) Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

The Department recognises the need for school staff wellbeing and collective self-care. Support for school staff wellbeing will be provided by Department Support Services including the PDST and CSL, as well as by the HSE's Health Promotion Team. An Occupational Health Strategy is in place as a supportive resource for individual staff members in schools. The aim of the Occupational Health Strategy is to promote the health

and wellbeing of employees in the workplace, with a strong focus on prevention. The Occupational Health Strategy comprises the Employee Assistance Service and the Occupational Health Service. The Employee Assistance Service (EAS) is provided by Spectrum Life under the logo of 'Wellbeing Together: Folláinne Le Chéile'.

Under the EAS, employees have a dedicated free-phone confidential helpline 1800 411 057 available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year providing advice on a range of issues such as wellbeing, legal, financial, mediation, management support etc. Where required, short-term counselling is available to employees and their families (over the age of 18 years and living at home). A bespoke wellbeing portal and app which offers access to podcasts and blogs on topics around wellbeing and mental health, family life, exercise and nutrition is also available. In addition online cognitive behavioural therapy is provided. As part of the services provided by Spectrum.Life a Mental Health Promotion Manager is available to develop and deliver evidence based mental health and wellbeing initiatives to reduce stigma and improve mental health literacy and to increase engagement with the service. They will also be providing a series of webinars and presentations to promote staff wellbeing in schools as schools reopen and during the upcoming school year.