



**Sacred Heart Secondary School,
Drogheda**

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

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

Appendices

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1) Introduction

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

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

The purpose of this document is to detail the procedures in place to ensure the the safe operation of the Sacred Heart 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 taken in the Sacred Heart School to minimise the risk of infection while recognising that no interpersonal activity is without risk of transmission of infection at any time. The details and templates used in this document are supported by the public health advice provided by the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) for the safe reopening of schools and educational facilities.

[That report is available here.](#)

Further advice from the HPSC on the use of face coverings in educational settings was received on the 6th August. This advice is available on gov.ie.

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

The Department has worked intensively with the education partners to develop consistent plans, advice, protocols and guidance for all schools, including the School COVID-19 Response plan. The Sacred Heart Schools Response Plan is based on the suite of documentation available to support schools to reopen safely and fully including guidance on learning, school programmes and wellbeing for the 2020/21 school year. There is also information on funding, staffing and resources to schools to support COVID-19 measures. All the documents are available at gov.ie/backtoschool

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

2) What is the Sacred Heart School COVID-19 Response Plan?

The SHS 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

The SHS COVID-19 Response Plan details policies and practices necessary for our 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 SHS 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, 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. However, should errors or omissions be identified, please notify us so that appropriate measures can be taken to rectify same.

3) School COVID-19 Policy

The SHS COVID-19 policy outlines the commitment of the school to implement the plan and help prevent the spread of the virus. The policy is signed and dated by the chairperson and principal of the BOM and has been brought to the attention of the staff, students, parents and others through meetings, emails, websites and the school app. The SHS COVID-19 policy was in place prior to the reopening of schools for the 2020/21 school year. The SHS COVID-19 policy can be found at **Appendix 1**.

4) 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 has been managed safely and in strict adherence to the public health advice and any guidance issued by the Department of Education.

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

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

- Means of keeping up to date with public health advice, changes to any Government plans for the safe reopening of society and Department of Education updates;
- Means of passing on this information in a timely manner to staff, students, parents and others as required;
- Ensured that staff have reviewed the training materials provided by the Department of Education (**details at Section 4.1**);
- Provided staff with access to the Return to Work (RTW) form (**details at Section 4.2**);
- Identified a Lead Worker representative (**details at Section 4.3**);
- Displayed posters and other signage to prevent introduction and spread of COVID-19 (**details at Section 4.4**);
- Made the necessary changes to the school layout to support the redesign of classrooms to support physical distancing (**details at Section 4.5**);
- Removed unnecessary clutter to facilitate ongoing cleaning of the school but take into account the importance of having educational materials to create a stimulating learning environment;
- Updated the health and safety risk assessment (**details at Section 4.6**);
- Made necessary arrangements to restrict access to the school and maintain records of contacts to the school (**details at 4.7**);
- Reviewed the school buildings to check the following:
 - Does the water system need flushing at outlets following low usage to prevent Legionella disease;
 - Has school equipment and mechanical ventilation been checked for signs of deterioration or damage before being used again;
 - Have bin collections and other essential services resumed.

Checklists are in place that are utilised to manage these arrangements, see appendices.

4.1) Induction Training

All staff have undertaken and completed the COVID-19 Induction Training prior to returning to the school building. The aim of the training was 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 through our communication channels in the school i.e. Teams, Sharepoint, Outlook, Vsware app.

All staff members who are unsure about any aspect of the COVID-19 Response Plan, the associated control measures, or his/her duties, are required to seek immediate guidance from the Principal/Deputy Principal/LWR who is supported in their role by the BOM.

A national information campaign to support parents and students happened 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. All information sent to schools regarding this campaign were shared with parents through our communication channels.

4.2) Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)

In order to return to the workplace, staff completed and returned the **Return to Work (RTW)** form 3 days prior to returning to work. A hard copy is attached at **Appendix 2**.

A RTW form should be completed and returned to the school before returning to work. Schools should request staff (verbally or in writing) to confirm that the details in the pre-return to work form remain unchanged following subsequent periods of closure such as school holidays.

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

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

People at very high risk (extremely vulnerable):

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

- are over 70 years of age – even if fit and well
- have had an organ transplant
- are undergoing active chemotherapy for cancer

- are having radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
- have cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
- are having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
- are having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
- have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking 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 working arrangements that apply to the very high risk school staff, is in accordance with those applying for the public service generally, and is detailed in the relevant Department of Education circulars available on the Department's website.

4.3) Lead Worker Representative (LWR)

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

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

Responsibility for the development and implementation of the COVID-19 Response Plan and the associated control measures lies 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 the Sacred Heart School, 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 have the facility to contact the LWR who will engage with school management.

Role of Lead Worker Representative:

In summary, the role of the LWR is to:

- Represent all staff in the workplace regardless of role, and be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of different staff cohorts;
- 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.

The LWR in the Sacred Heart School was chosen by the staff: **Ms. Caroline Sheelan & Ms. Veronica Mullen: Contact No. 041 9837812**

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.

A meeting of the LWR and in most cases the Principal/Deputy Principal takes place once a week to review procedures, protocols etc.

Full details of the arrangements which apply for the LWR in post primary schools is set out at **Appendix 3**.

4.4) Signage

The Sacred Heart School has displayed signage outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene in all classrooms, on corridors, entrance and exit doors, staff areas, bathrooms. The posters chosen are published by the DES and HSE with age appropriate key health messages on hand washing, sneeze and cough etiquette etc.

4.5) Making Changes to School Layout

Maintaining physical distancing in the school environment is recommended as one of the key control measures to minimise the risk of the introduction and spread of COVID-19. Further information on how physical distancing can be used in the school environment is found at **Section 5.4** below including a link to 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*".

To ensure physical Distancing in the classroom the following procedures are in place:

- All classrooms are reconfigured to maintain a 1 meter distance between all students and 2 meter from the teacher
- All lockers have been taken from the classrooms and stored locally
- All teacher units, storage units and excess furniture is taken from the classroom and stored
- All students are classroom based to support students in keeping their own area for books etc.
- The size of the classroom was chosen based on numbers in class groups
- All class groups are located with their year group, where possible, to reduce movement around the school.

4.6) Health and Safety Risk Assessment

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment. A risk assessment to identify the control measures required to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 in the Sacred Heart School settings is attached at **Appendix 4**.

The schools has reviewed our emergency procedures involving, fire safety, first aid, accidents and dangerous occurrences in considering the risks that arise due to the school's COVID-19 Response Plan.

First Aid/emergency procedure

The standard First Aid/emergency procedure continues to apply in the Sacred Heart School. All students and staff are updated on the exit and entrance routes in the case of an emergency and the location of meeting area. Notices in classrooms to inform the location of exits. All first responders emergency kits have been updated with the relevant PPE required. It is part of the school's protocol to call an ambulance or the fire brigade on 112/999 In an emergency or in case of a serious incident.

4.7) Access to School and Contact Log

Access to the school building will be in line with the following agreed school procedures.

All parents informed that access to the school is restricted to essential appointments only. All meeting will be held through Teams, Zoom or telephone conversation unless there is a need to meet face to face.

Dropping of lunch, drinks, equipment, books to the school by parents will not be permitted. Students who forget their lunch will be provided with a lunch, drink by the school. Teachers will support students who forget to bring equipment etc.

Arrangements for necessary visitors such as contractors and outside agencies will be restricted to essential purposes and limited to those who have obtained prior approval from the principal. Meetings outside will be arranged if possible. All visitors must use the hand sanitiser and complete the contact log in the front reception.

Course/workshop facilitators will be briefed on the schools Covid 19 procedures by the teacher overseeing the course.

Visitors who are in the school over lunch will be required to take lunch outside of the school building.

The Department of Education Inspectorate may have access to the schools to support the implementation of public health advice relating to creating a safe learning and working environment for all. The visits will be agreed by the Principal.

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. The sign in/sign out log of those entering the school facilities will be maintained. The school has access to an admin system which includes contact details of all staff and students. The contact log is available at **Appendix 5**.

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, 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 the Sacred Heart School aims to minimise the Risk of Introduction of COVID-19 into our school:

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

- Advise staff and pupils to self-isolate or restrict their movements at home if they display any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 and contact their family doctor to arrange a test
- Advise staff and pupils not to return to or attend school in the event of the following:
 - if they are identified by the HSE as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19
 - if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus
 - If they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.
- Advise staff and pupils to cooperate with any public health officials and the school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice in the event of a case or outbreak in the school;
- 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 staff and students to cooperate with any public health officials and the school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice in the event of a case or outbreak in the school
- Advise everyone entering the school building that they needs 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 contract 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

Infection with the virus that causes COVID-19 can cause illness, ranging from mild to severe, and, in some cases, can be fatal. It can take up to 14 days for symptoms to show. They can be similar to symptoms of cold and flu.

Common symptoms of coronavirus include:

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

If you have any common symptoms of COVID-19 (coronavirus), self-isolate (stay in your room) and phone your family doctor straight away to see if you need a COVID-19 test. Other people in your household will need to restrict their movements (stay at home).

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

For the complete list of symptoms, please refer to the HSE Website.

COVID-19 Tracker App

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

- alert you if you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 (coronavirus)
- keep other app users safe by alerting them if you test positive for COVID-19

- give you advice on what to do if you have symptoms

You can download the free app from [Apple's AppStore](#) or the [GooglePlay store](#)

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.

Our school promotes good hygiene and display posters throughout the schools on how to wash your hands and has shared the HSE guidelines on handwashing during the Orientation programme to all students and staff.

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

Hand hygiene is achieved by hand washing in the staff and student bathrooms using warm water, liquid soap, paper towels or hand dryers.

All students and staff received a personal hand sanitizer to encourage adequate hand hygiene.

Use of hand hygiene facilities including wash hand basins is managed through the supervision of the bathrooms during break, lunch, start and end of school.

Hand washing stations are restricted to maintain social distancing

Hand sanitiser dispensers are deployed at exit and entry points of the school, in classrooms.

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

Posters displaying hand washing techniques and promoting hand washing are placed on walls adjacent to washing facilities

There is a requirement for access to hand washing facilities after activities that are likely to soil hands, for example playing outside or certain sporting activities as hand sanitiser does not work on dirty hands

Alcohol-based sanitiser must not be stored or used near heat or naked flame

Frequency of Hand Hygiene

Students and staff are encouraged to 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.
- When exiting the building

The purchase of all cleaning products are in line with DES advice and support. Stock is stored in a separate storage room outside the main school building. The monitoring and ordering of the stock is the responsibility of LWR. A review of the products, cost effectiveness and safety takes place on a regular basis.,

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

Given that each school setting is different in terms of (i) location; (ii) physical layout (iii) available space within the school; and (iv) student numbers; our school was best placed to decide on the appropriate reconfigurations / operational changes necessary to maintain physical distancing.

The suite of measures agreed in the Sacred Heart School include:

1. Reconfiguration of class spaces to maximise physical distancing, taking out all unnecessary storage units, single tables, new chairs
2. Utilising and reconfiguring all available space in the school in order to maximise physical distancing; provide larger classrooms to facilitate 30 students at a 1 meter distance by dividing the library into two classrooms using a portable divider and the cafeteria into three classrooms and an overflow staff room
3. Review Timetables; Move to classroom based instead of teacher based classrooms, all class groups located on the one corridor, reduce class size if possible, consideration of staggered breaks, lunches, reassess procedures for holding assembly – move to live stream with the support of the Student Leadership Council.
4. Use Live Streaming with the Teams platform within the school but only if absolutely necessary.
5. Accessing available spaces within the local community for part of the TY courses.

[A link to 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" is provided here.](#)

[You can see a link to illustrated classroom layouts to maintain social distancing here.](#)

Decreasing interaction

The extent to which decreasing interaction is possible in a post primary school relies on a common-sense approach recognising the limits to which this can be achieved between students.

In the Sacred Heart School physical distancing of 2m where possible or at least 1m should be maintained between desks or between individual students or staff.

Students remain in the base classroom for the most part and teachers move between rooms except for options and streamed classes which require movement. To reduce movement all class groups all allocated to classrooms along the same corridor.

A seating plan is arranged at the start of each term and students stay in the allocated seats. Seating plans are available to access or all teachers

A number of double classes have been planned on the timetable to minimise movement during the day.

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

Students moving from class to class are required to sanitise the table and chair prior to leaving the classroom

Hand sanitising is required when moving between classes by teachers and students.

Teachers have access to their own laptop & iPad to use in the classrooms

Physical distancing between the teacher and class is observed.

Students are not allowed to mix between classes at lunch and break instead they are encouraged to use the outside area.

Social physical contact (hand to hand greetings, hugs) is not allowed

Movement of students around the class is only for essential purposes. Use of students own device reduces the risk of sharing resources.

Staff and students are encouraged to avoid sharing of personal items, if it is required wipes/paper and spray are available for cleaning

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

Physical Distancing outside of the classroom and within the school

School drop off/collection

Parents have been informed that drop off/collecting students should be arranged to maintain physical distancing of 2m where possible and preferably away from the school

Walking to school is encouraged and also cycling

Use of all exit doors in the building avoids congregation of student/staff at the school gates and congestion at home time

Students entering the building in the morning move straight to their designated learning space/classroom for morning assembly

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.

When a 2m cannot be maintained in staff groups, as much as distance as is possible and guidance on face covering should be observed.

Staff "pods" or teams who take breaks together are facilitated in a variety of rooms and spaces during lunchtime.

Staff meetings are held remotely and smaller meetings are organised face to face with a choice of remote. All meetings are held with the intention of meeting in a well ventilated room and keeping a 2 meter distance.

The school has a no hand shaking policy.

Staff are encouraged to leave the school building at the end of the school day.

Canteen

The canteen facility has been suspended to facilitate the building of additional classrooms and reduce the risk of queuing

Students bring in their own food for lunch and break.

Students are encouraged to move outside during lunch, weather permitting

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.

Students walk in single file along the corridor to facilitate the ease of moving around.

Ventilation

The Department has published guidance setting out the practical steps for good ventilation in accordance with public health advice '*Practical Steps for the Deployment of Good Ventilation Practices in Schools*' The guidance sets out an overall approach for schools that windows should be open as fully as possible when classrooms are not in use (e.g. during break-times or lunch-times (assuming not in use) and also at the end of each school day) and partially open when classrooms are in use. The guidance provides that good ventilation can be achieved in classrooms without causing discomfort, particularly during cold weather.

5.5) Use of PPE in Schools

The Department published "Guidance to Post Primary Schools on PPE consumables and equipment" on gov.ie/backtoschool. This provided us with necessary information to support the ordering appropriate quantities of PPE consumables and equipment to support the full and safe reopening of schools.

The updated advice from the HPSC to the Department of Education recommends that face coverings should be worn by staff members where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of 2 meter 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.

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

Where staff provide healthcare to children with medical needs in the school environment, they should apply standard precautions as per usual practice.

Reception Areas:

No persons or visitors will be permitted into the general office. Perspex is fitted in offices to maintain a physical distance of 2m from other staff or students.

Masks/Face Coverings

Cloth face coverings act 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 school wear a face covering when a physical distance of 2 meters 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.

All students on the post primary transport scheme should be asked to wear face coverings unless there is good reason not to do so.

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 sanitizer) before putting on and after taking off the face coverings.

Information on the proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings is shared in posters around the school, during assembly on a regular basis and during the orientation programme. <https://www.gov.ie/en/publications/aac74c-guidance-on-safe-use-of-face-coverings/>

All teachers and staff are 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.

Face coverings, its storage and use is the responsibility of every student. All students and staff received a SHS face covering and teachers a visor.

Disposable face coverings are available for staff/students if required.

Cloth face coverings should not be worn if they are wet. A wet cloth face covering may make it difficult to breathe.

Medical face masks are available for use where necessary.

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 or 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 are available to all staff if required

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 readily available in the care cabin.

6) Impact of COVID-19 on certain school activities

Choir/Music Performance

Choir practices/performance and music practices/performance involving wind instruments pose a higher level of risk and special consideration is given to how they are held. Careful consideration is taken with all matters of performance and recordings are encouraged if possible. The music room is well-ventilated and the distance between performers is maintained if required.

Sport Activities

The PE department refers to the HPSC guidance on Return to Sport when planning sporting activities.

PE outside is a weekly occurrence.

All extra-curricular activities are temporarily suspended

Shared Equipment

Art –Students have their own individual art and equipment supplies.

Electronics – Shared electronic devices such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards are cleaned between use.

Musical Equipment/Instruments – Instruments are not generally shared between students however if shared they are sanitised accordingly

Books – Students are encouraged to leave books at home or in school to prevent transmission between home and school. Personal devices are used to access books online if required. Sharing of books is discouraged.

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

7) Hygiene and Cleaning in Schools

The Department of Education has provided additional funding to schools to support the enhanced cleaning required to minimise the risks of COVID-19.

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. Staff have read and understood the cleaning advice and apply the guidance to all areas of the school as appropriate.

Records of cleaning routines are maintained by eth LWR with regard to hygiene arrangements for wash hand and toilet facilities.

Contract cleaners (4) clean the school at the end of every day as well as a caretaker and cleaner who clean the school throughout the day and maintain supplies of cleaning equipment.

The school is sanitized very month using contract cleaners.

Students moving between classrooms wipe down their desk, chair and surface before leaving the room using cleaning products available in every classroom.

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 are required to 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.

Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.). All equipment such as microwave, kettle, fridge are not in use.

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. Sanitisation will be used at the earliest time possible.

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

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 paid 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 – training provided by DP for all staff

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.

The designated isolation area is a portacabin (Care Cabin) at the back of the school. The designated isolation is away from other staff and students and can be accessed from any part of the school using the outside area.

If a staff member/student displays symptom 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 are contacted immediately. All parents are reminded that all contact details are up to date.
- The person is accompanied to the care cabin using the outside area to access the cabin. All persons should keep 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;
- ;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 mask. Gloves can be used but they are not needed as the virus does not pass through skin;
- An apron is available in the care cabin – this should be worn
- Ensure the person presenting with symptoms wears their mask, if not provide a mask.
- 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 (all provided in the care cabin)
- 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;
- Record the incident in the Care cabin log
- Arrange for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved – (**details at Section 7**)
- Lock the care cabin and do not allow entry until cleaned

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. School staff should be encouraged to download the HSE COVID-19 tracker app to assist Public Health for contact tracing purposes. Both in and out of the school setting (see section 5.1).

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.
- Not to return to or attend school in the event of the following:
 - if they are identified as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19
 - if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus
 - If they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.
- 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.
- Cooperate with any public health personnel and their school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice given in the event of a case or outbreak in their school
- Undergo any COVID-19 testing that may be required as part of mass or serial testing as advised by Public Health

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'.

The EAS is a self-referral service where employees have access to a dedicated free-phone confidential helpline 1800 411 057 available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year providing advice on a range of issues such as wellbeing, legal, financial, mediation, management support etc. The service is also available via SMS, WhatsApp, e-mail, live chat and call back request. All points of contact for the service are qualified, accredited and experienced mental health professionals.

Where required, short-term counselling is available to employees and their families (over the age of 18 years and living at home).

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

A bespoke wellbeing portal and app is available which offers access to podcasts, blogs, live chats and videos on topics around wellbeing and mental health, family life, exercise and nutrition. E-Learning programmes across mental health, sleep and a range of wellbeing topics are also available. In addition online cognitive behavioural therapy is provided. As part of the services provided by Spectrum.Life, a Mental Health Promotion Manager is available to develop and deliver evidence based mental health and wellbeing initiatives to reduce stigma and improve mental health literacy and to increase engagement with the service. Spectrum.Life also provides a series of webinars and presentations to promote wellbeing in schools.

APPENDIX 1



Sacred Heart School,
Sunnyside, Drogheda, Co. Louth

COVID-19 Policy Statement

Sacred Heart School, Drogheda 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 Representative(s), who will be supported in line with the agreement between the Department and education partners.

Signed: Vincent Donovan (Chairperson, BOM) **Signed:** Leontí Carroll (Principal) **Date:** 17th August 2020

Appendix 2:

Return to Work Form



This form must be completed by staff in advance of returning to work.

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

Name: _____

Name of School: _____

Name of Principal: _____ Date: _____

	Questions	YES	NO
1.	Do you have symptoms of cough, fever, high temperature, difficulty breathing, loss or change in your sense of smell or taste now or in the past 14 days?		
2.	Have you been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection in the last 14 days?		
3	Are you awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test?		

4	In the past 14 days, have you been in contact with a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19?		
5	Have you been advised by a doctor to self-isolate at this time?		
6	Have you been advised to restrict your movements at this time?		
7	Have you been advised to cocoon at this time? Note: if you're at very high risk (extremely vulnerable) from COVID-19 you may be advised to cocoon.		

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

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

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 3:



Sacred Heart School,
Sunnyside, Drogheda, Co. Louth

Lead Worker Representative – Post primary Schools

The COVID-19 Return to Work Safely Protocol is designed to support employers and workers to put measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. The Protocol was developed following discussion and agreement between the Government, Trade Unions and Employers at the Labour Employer Economic Forum.

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

The purpose of this section is to set out the provisions in respect of the LWR in schools. These arrangements will operate for the 2020/21 school year and will be kept under review by the parties.

This document should be read in conjunction with:

- the [COVID-19 Return to Work Safely Protocol](#);
- the [Guidance and FAQs for Public Service Employers during COVID-19](#);
- COVID-19 Response Plan for Post primary Schools (available on the Department of Education website).

1. Collaborative Approach

Responsibility for the development and implementation of the COVID-19 Response Plan and the associated control measures lies 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.

2. Role of the Lead Worker Representative

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.

3. What can a Lead Worker Representative Do?

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

- Cleaning protocols and their implementation
- Physical Distancing

- Configuration/re-configuration of the school facilities, including classrooms, corridors, halls, open areas, entry and exit points, school grounds etc.
- Implementation of one-way systems in the school to ensure social distancing including when entering and exiting the school
- Hand Hygiene facilities including their location and whether they are stocked and maintained
- Hand sanitising
- Staff awareness around hand hygiene in the school
- Respiratory hygiene
- Personal Protective Equipment
- At Risk Groups
- Visitors/Contractors

4. Does a LWR have any legal responsibilities?

No. A Lead Worker Representative does not have any duties in relation to COVID-19 other than those that apply to employees generally. In other words, the LWR is not responsible for the control measures within an organisation, which remains the employer's responsibility.

5. Lead Worker Representative(s)

Every school will appoint one Lead Worker Representative.

In schools with more than 40 staff, a second Lead Worker Representative will be appointed.

6. Selection of Lead Worker Representative(s)

The school staff are entitled to select staff members for the LWR position(s). The LWR(s) represent all staff in the workplace regardless of role and must be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of different staff cohorts. In this regard, where a school has two LWRs, the roles should be spread between teaching and non-teaching staff where feasible e.g. where there is a significant number of non-teaching staff in the school and one or more expressions of interest are received from that cohort (this will be discussed further between the parties).

The process for the selection and appointment of the LWR(s) is that management will seek expressions of interest from all staff in the first instance. A template email for this purpose is attached. If an election is necessary, all school staff have a vote to select the LWR(s).

The LWR(s) will, following selection by the school staff, be formally appointed by the BoM/ETB. The LWR(s) will be required to confirm, prior to taking up the role, that they have been provided with and have completed the requisite training and that they are fully aware of the requirements of the role.

7. Supports for the Lead Worker Representative/s

The LWR(s) shall be entitled to:

- Be provided with information and training in respect of their role *[further detail to be provided]*;
- Be consulted by school management on the control measures being put in place by the school to minimise the risk of being exposed to COVID-19;
- Regular communication with school management on issues related to COVID-19;
- Be informed of changes in practice arising from COVID-19 response measures;
- Have access to any risk assessments prepared or carried out in relation to COVID-19 and to details of incidents of suspected COVID-19 cases that have been notified to the HSE, where they occurred and any actions taken.
- Be provided with the necessary facilities to enable them to consult with employees or prepare any submissions or reports. These might include access to a meeting room, photocopier, communications and equipment.

Where the LWR is a teacher, the LWR will receive protected time of 2 hours per week from timetable to enable them to carry out their duties in that role. In the rare instances where the appointment of a teacher selected for the LWR would cause curricular/timetabling difficulties which cannot be resolved, school management will examine internal and external possibilities to enable the teacher's appointment as LWR. Where the matter cannot be resolved, management will set out the reasons why this is the case. In this circumstance, an alternative individual must be appointed as LWR.

Where the LWR is an SNA, 66 of the "72 hours" will be utilised by the LWR to carry out their duties in that role.

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

8. Procedure for dealing with issues that arise

Where a COVID-19 control concern is identified by the LWR (or is notified to the LWR by a staff member), the LWR should bring this to the attention of the Principal. Action points for addressing the issue should where possible be agreed between the LWR and the Principal as a matter of urgency. Staff should be informed of the outcome. It is envisaged that issues will be resolved at school level to the maximum extent possible.

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

If, having exhausted the process above, a serious issue of concern remains outstanding, the LWR may have recourse to the Health and Safety Authority.

9. Glossary of Terms

- **COVID-19 Response Plan:** plan designed to support the staff and BOM/ ETB in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the school environment. The plan details the policies and practices necessary for a school to meet the Return to Work Safely Protocol, the Department of Education plan for school reopening and to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in the school environment. COVID-19 Response Plans for Post primary Schools are available on the Department's website.
- **Labour Employer Economic Forum (LEEF):** the forum for high level dialogue between Government, Trade Union and Employer representatives on matters of strategic national importance - involves the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Government & Employers.
- **Return to Work Protocol:** national protocol designed to support employers and workers to put measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.
- **Safety Representative:** Section 25 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 sets out the selection and role of the Safety Representative in the workplace. The rights of the Safety Representative are set out in legislation. (Note: A Safety Representative has rights and not duties under the 2005 Act). This role is separate to the LWR under COVID-19, but the Safety Representative may act as the LWR if selected to do so by the staff.

TEMPLATE EMAIL TO STAFF REGARDING LEAD WORKER REPRESENTATIVE APPOINTMENT PROCESS

Dear All,

As you will be aware, significant work and consultation has taken place to enable a full return to school from the beginning of the 2020/21 school year.

The resumption of school-based teaching and learning and the return to the workplace of staff must be done safely and in strict adherence to the advice and instructions of public health authorities and the Government.

The COVID-19 Return to Work Safely Protocol is designed to support employers and workers to put measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. The Protocol was developed following discussion and agreement between the Government, Trade Unions and Employers at the Labour Employer Economic Forum. In addition, every school has a COVID-19 Response Plan in place.

The Return to Work Safely 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.

A copy of the school's COVID-19 Response Plan is attached and this includes further detail on the role of the Lead Worker Representative. In this school, there are 2 Lead Worker Representative positions.

Under the Protocol, the school staff are entitled to select staff members for the LWR position(s). In this regard, I am now inviting expressions of interest from staff for these positions, by return email.

The LWR(s) represents all staff in the workplace regardless of role and must be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of different staff cohorts. Where a school has two LWRs, the roles should be spread between teaching and non-teaching staff where feasible e.g. where there is a significant number of non-teaching staff in the school and one or more expressions of interest are received from that cohort.

Training for the role will be provided.

If an election is necessary, all school staff have a vote to select the LWR(s). Further details on this process will be sent to you if this arises. Following selection by the school staff, the LWR(s) will be formally appointed. The LWR details will be sent to all staff following their appointment.

Yours sincerely, *Leóni Carroll* (Principal)



Appendix 4

Risk Assessment COVID-19 Risk Template

Hazards	Is the hazard present? Y/N	What is the risk?	Risk rating H=High M=Medium L=Low	Controls (When all controls are in place risk will be reduced)	Is this control in place?	Action/to do list/outstanding controls *Risk rating applies to outstanding controls outlined in this column	Person responsible	Signature and date when action completed
COVID-19	N	Illness	H	School Covid19 Response Plan in place in line with Department of Education guidance and the Return to Work Safely Protocol and public health advice		<i>Examples of Actions</i> Follow public health guidance from HSE re hygiene and respiratory etiquette Complete School COVID-19 Policy Statement Return to Work Forms received and reviewed Undertake Induction Training Maintain log of staff, student and visitors Complete checklists as required: School Management How to deal with a suspected case Physical distancing requirements	Name of staff member	

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

If there is one or more High Risk (H) actions needed, then the risk of injury could be high and immediate action should be taken. Medium Risk (M) actions should be dealt with as soon as possible. Low Risk (L) actions should be dealt with as soon as practicable.

Risk Assessment carried out by:
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Date:

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Appendix 5

**Sacred Heart School,
Sunnyside, Drogheda, Co. Louth**



Contact Tracing Log

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



Appendix 6

Checklist for School Management

This checklist supports planning and preparation, control measures and induction needed to support a safe return to school for students, staff, parents and others.

For completion by the agreed person with overall responsibility of managing the implementation of the COVID-19 Response plan. This is likely to be the principal (with supports as agreed with the Department).

Planning and Systems

1. Is there a system in place to keep up to date with the latest advice from Government and DES, to ensure that advice is made available in a timely manner to staff and students and to adjust your plans and procedures in line with that advice?
2. Have you appointed staff member/s to the LWR position (detailed at Section 4.3 above) in accordance with the agreed protocol?
3. Have you advised staff as to has been appointed to the position of LWR?
4. Have you prepared a school COVID-19 response plan and made it available to staff and students? ***Department of Education guidance and templates provided***
5. Have you a system in place to provide staff and students with information and guidance on the measures that have been put in place to help prevent the spread of the virus and what is expected of them?
6. Have you displayed the COVID-19 posters in suitable locations highlighting the signs and symptoms of COVID-19?
7. Have you told staff and students of the purpose of the COVID-19 contact log?
8. Have you a COVID-19 contact log in place to support HSE tracing efforts if required? ***(Contact log template attached)***
9. Have you informed staff on the measures that have been put in place to help prevent the spread of the virus and what is expected of them, and provided a system for them to raise issues or concerns and to have them responded to?
10. Have you reviewed and updated risk assessments in line with Department advice to take account of any controls to help prevent the spread of COVID-19? ***(Risk template attached)***
11. Have you updated emergency plans, in particular to take account of the COVID response plan?

Staff

12. Have you made available to each staff member a COVID-19 return-to-work form to be completed and returned 3 days before they return to the workplace? ***(Template attached)***

15. Have you advised staff and pupils not to return or attend school if they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel
16. Have you advised staff and pupils to cooperate with any public health officials and the school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice in the event of a case or outbreak in the school;
17. Are you aware of staff members who are at very high risk under the HSE guidance on people most at risk ([HSE guidance on people most at-risk](#)) and advised them of the Department of Education's agreed arrangements for management of those staff?
18. Have you advised staff and students they must stay at home if sick or if they have any [symptoms of COVID-19](#)?
19. Have you told staff and students what to do and what to expect if they start to develop symptoms of COVID-19 while in school, including where the isolation area is?
20. Have you advised staff of the availability of the supports of the occupational health and wellbeing programme through Spectrum Life?
21. Has a lead worker representative been identified (in line with the process agreed with the DES and education partners) and detailed at Section 4.3 of this plan to help advise staff and to monitor compliance with COVID-19 control measures in the school and taken measures to ensure all staff know who the representative is?

Training and Induction

22. Have you advised staff and students to view the Department of Education's training materials which are available online?
23. Have you taken the necessary steps to update your school induction / familiarisation training to include all information relating to COVID-19?
24. Have first aiders, if available, been given updated training on infection prevention and control re hand hygiene and use of PPE as appropriate? *(It is intended that training will be provided as part of the DES online training programme).*

Buildings / Equipment

25. If you have mechanical ventilation does it need cleaning or maintenance before the school reopens?
26. Does your water system need flushing at outlets following low usage to prevent Legionnaire's Disease?
27. Have you visually checked, or had an appropriate person check, all equipment in the school for signs of deterioration or damage before being used again?
28. Have you arranged for the school including all equipment, desks, benches, doors and frequently touched surfaces points, been thoroughly cleaned before reopening?

Control Measures in place

Hand / respiratory hygiene

29. Have you accessed supplies of hand sanitizers and any necessary PPE equipment in line with the HPSC health guidance relating to the reopening of schools, from the national framework provided by the Department? This framework close to being finalised and will be available for drawdown with guidance as to how and what to order accompanying it.

30. Are there hand washing/hand sanitising stations in place to accommodate staff, students and visitors adhering to hand hygiene measures in accordance with Department guidance?
31. Have arrangements been made for staff and students to have regular access to hand-washing/hand sanitising facilities as appropriate?
32. Are hand sanitisers easily available and accessible for all staff, students and visitors – e.g. in each classroom and at entry and exit points to school buildings?
33. Have you made arrangements to ensure hand hygiene facilities are regularly checked and well-stocked?
34. Does the alcohol-based hand sanitiser have at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol as the active ingredient?
35. Have you informed staff and students about the importance of hand washing?
36. Have you arranged for staff and students to view [how to wash their hands](#) (with soap and water for at least 20 seconds) and dry them correctly through the use of the HSE video resource?
37. Have you shown staff and students how to use hand sanitiser correctly and where hand-sanitising stations are located?
38. Have you displayed posters on how to wash hands correctly in appropriate locations?
39. Have you told staff and students when they need to wash their hands or use hand sanitiser? This includes:
 - before and after eating and preparing food
 - after coughing or sneezing
 - after using the toilet
 - where hands are dirty
 - before and after wearing gloves
 - before and after being on public transport
 - before leaving home
 - when arriving/leaving the school /other sites
 - when entering and exiting vehicles
 - when entering and exiting school buildings
 - after each class
 - after touching potentially contaminated surfaces
 - if in contact with someone displaying any COVID-19 symptoms
40. Have you told staff and students of the importance of good respiratory measures to limit the spread of the virus, including?
 - avoid touching the face, eyes, nose and mouth
 - cover coughs and sneezes with an elbow or a tissue
 - dispose of tissues in a covered bin

Physical Distancing:

41. Have you identified all available school space to be used to maximise physical distancing?
42. Have you reviewed the templates provided by the Department of Education which show options for revised layout of school rooms to meet physical distancing requirements?
43. Have you arranged to revise the layout of the rooms and furniture as per the Department guidelines?
44. Have you arranged in each room that the teacher's desk should be at least 1m (and where possible 2m) away from student desks?

45. Have you arranged in each room that students would be, at least 1m and (where possible 2m) away from each other?
46. Have you where possible and practicable assigned students to main class cohorts to minimise the risk of infection from COVID-19?
47. Have you arranged the timetable to facilitate double classes where possible and practicable?
48. Have you advised staff and students that when students are moving to an elective subject they would, where practicable be seated with members of their main class cohort?
49. Have you made arrangements to limit interaction on arrival and departure from school and in other shared areas?
50. Have you encouraged walking or cycling to school as much as possible?
51. Have you made arrangements, in so far as possible, to open additional access points to school to reduce congestion?
52. Can you provide a one system for entering and exiting the school, where practical?
53. Have you arranged for staff meetings to be held remotely or in small groups or in large spaces to facilitate physical distancing?
54. Have you taken steps to minimise rotation of staff between classes where possible?
55. Have you a system to regularly remind staff and students to maintain physical distancing?
56. Have you advised staff and students not to shake hands and to avoid any physical contact?
57. Have you stopped all non-essential travel for school activities?
58. Have you advised staff of the Department's guidance to achieve good ventilation
59. Have you checked any mechanical ventilation systems to ensure an adequate supply of fresh air is used.

Visitors to Schools

60. Have you identified the activities that involve interacting with essential visitors to schools, made arrangements to minimise the number of such visitors and put in place measures to prevent physical contact, as far as possible?
61. Are there arrangements in place to inform essential visitors to schools of the measures to help prevent the spread of infection?
62. Have you a system in place for all visitors who do need to come to the school to make appointment, arrange to contact a central point and to record their visit using the contact tracing log?

Appendix 7

Sacred Heart School,
Sunnyside, Drogheda, Co. Louth



Checklist for dealing with a suspected case of COVID-19

Each main class cohort should be considered a separate group for the purpose of managing suspected cases. Each teacher/staff member will be required to manage a suspected case in line with the protocol and training.

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

Isolation Area

1. Have you identified a place that can be used as an isolation area, preferably with a door that can close?
2. The isolation area does not have to be a separate room but if it is not a room it should be 2m away from others in the room.
3. Is the isolation area accessible, including to staff and students with disabilities?
4. Is the route to the isolation area accessible?

5. Have you a contingency plan for dealing with more than one suspected case of COVID-19?
6. Are the following available in the isolation area(s)?
 - Tissues
 - Hand sanitiser
 - Disinfectant/wipes
 - Gloves/Masks
 - Waste Bags
 - Bins

Isolating a Person

7. Are procedures in place to accompany the infected person to the isolation area, along the isolation route with physical distancing from them?
8. Are staff familiar with this procedure?
9. Have others been advised to maintain a distance of at least 2m from the affected person at all times? (it is intended that this will be dealt with as part of DES online training)
10. Is there a disposable mask to wear for the affected person while in the common area and when exiting the building?

Arranging for the affected person to leave the School

11. Staff – have you established by asking them if the staff members feel well enough to travel home?
12. Student – have you immediately contacted their parents/guardians and arranged for them to collect their student? Under no circumstances can a student use public or school transport to travel home if they are a suspected case of COVID-19.
13. The affected person should be advised to avoid touching other people, surfaces and objects.
14. The affected person should be advised to cover their mouth and nose with disposable tissue(s) when they cough or sneeze, and to put the tissue in the bin.
15. Has transport home or to an assessment centre been arranged if the affected person has been directed to go there by their GP?
16. Has the affected person been advised not to go to their GP's surgery or any pharmacy or hospital?
17. Has the affected person been advised they must not use public transport?
18. Has the affected person been advised to continue wearing the face mask until they reach home?

Follow up

19. Have you carried out an assessment of the incident to identify any follow-up actions needed?
20. Have you advised the LWR of the incident in accordance with the agreed protocol?
21. Are you available to provide advice and assistance if contacted by the HSE?

Cleaning

22. Have you taken the isolation area out-of-use until cleaned and disinfected?
23. Have you made arrangements to clean and disinfect any classroom space where the staff or students were located?

24. Have you arranged for cleaning and disinfection of the isolation area and any other areas involved, as soon as practical after the affected person has left the building?

25. Have the cleaners been trained in dealing with contaminated areas and supplied with the appropriate PPE? *(It is intended to provide online training for cleaning staff. Appropriate PPE will be available to schools through the national procurement process which schools can access in line with the guidance which will be provided shortly)*

Appendix 8



Sacred Heart School,
Sunnyside, Drogheda, Co. Louth

Checklist Lead Worker Representative

Checklist of questions in line with the protocol at Appendix 3 as agreed between the Department and management bodies

1. Have you been s/elected by your colleagues on the staff and have you agreed with your school principal to act as a Lead Worker Representative for your school, in accordance with the process for *lead worker representative/s in schools that has been agreed centrally and is to be implemented locally*).
2. Have you been provided with information and training in relation to the role of Lead Worker Representative? (*Training for this role is currently being explored with the HSA*).
3. Are you keeping up to date with the latest COVID-19 advice from Government?
4. Are you aware of the signs and symptoms of COVID-19?
5. Do you know how the virus is spread?
6. Do you know how to help prevent the spread of COVID-19?
7. Have you watched and do you understand the online training provided by the Department of Education and have you been given induction training before returning to school?
8. Have you been made aware of the control measures your school has put in place to minimise the risk of you and others being exposed to COVID-19?
9. Are you helping in keeping your fellow workers up to date with the latest COVID-19 advice from Government?
10. Have you completed the COVID-19 return-to-work form and given it to your school? (*DES template Return-to-Work form available*)
11. Are you aware of the control measures your school has put in place to minimise the risk of you and others being exposed to COVID-19? (*Checklist for School Management available*)
12. On behalf of the employer did your school principal consult with you when putting control measures in place? Control measures have been agreed centrally between the Department and education partners and will be revised as necessary. Consultation at school level should take place on any specific local arrangements necessary to implement the protocol
13. Have you a means of regular communication with the principal and where applicable any other person with overall responsibility for the school COVID-19 plan?
14. Are you co-operating with your school to make sure these control measures are maintained?
15. Have you familiarised yourself with the cleaning requirements needed to help prevent cross contamination? (*Checklist for Cleaning and Disinfection available*)
16. Have you been asked to walk around and check that the control measures are in place and are being maintained?

17. Are you reporting immediately to the person with overall responsibility for the school COVID-19 plan any problems, areas of non-compliance or defects that you see?
18. Are you keeping a record of any problems, areas of non-compliance or defects and what action was taken to remedy the issue?
19. Are you familiar with what to do in the event of someone developing the symptoms of COVID-19 while at school?
20. Are you co-operating with your school in identifying an isolation area and a safe route to that area? (*Checklist for dealing with suspected case of COVID-19 available*)
21. Are you helping in the monitoring and keeping under review the management of someone developing symptoms of COVID-19 while at school?
22. Once the affected person has left the school, are you helping in assessing what follow-up action is needed?
23. Are you helping in maintaining the staff and student contact log?
24. Have you been made aware of any changes to the emergency plans or first aid procedures for your school?
25. Are you making yourself available to fellow staff to listen to any COVID-19 control concerns or suggestions they may have?
26. Are you raising those control concerns or suggestions with your school Principal and feeding back the response to the staff member/s who raised the issue?
27. Are you aware of the availability of the Spectrum Life Wellbeing Together Programme?
28. Have you been provided by the Principal/ school management with the supports to which you are entitled in your role as Lead Worker Representative?
29. If you are a teacher, have you been provided with the 2 hours per week of protected time off class contact hours, as provided for in the protocol?
30. If you are an SNA, have you been provided with 66 of the "72 hours", as provided for in the protocol?
31. If you are a school secretary or a caretaker have your duties been re-prioritised by school management to afford you sufficient time to carry out your duties as LWR within the scope of your normal contracted hours, as provide for in the protocol?

Appendix 9



Sacred Heart Secondary School,
Sunnyside, Drogheda, Co. Louth

Checklist for Cleaning

1. Have you a system in place for checking and keeping up to date with the latest public health advice from Government and the Department of Education, to ensure that advice is made available in a timely manner to staff and students and to adjust your cleaning procedures in line with that advice?
2. Have you reviewed the HPSC health advice for the safe reopening of schools, in particular **Section 5.6 Environmental Hygiene**?
3. Have you explained the need for the enhanced cleaning regime to staff and students?
4. Are you aware that cleaning is best achieved using a general purpose detergent and warm water, clean cloths, mops and the mechanical action of wiping and cleaning, following by rinsing and drying?
5. Have you sufficient cleaning materials in place to support the enhanced cleaning regime?
6. Have you provided training for cleaning staff on the enhanced cleaning regime? (*DES intends to provide online training for cleaning staff*)
7. Have you made arrangements for the regular and safe emptying of bins?
8. Are you familiar with the cleaning options for school settings set out in the HPSC health advice for schools for surfaces, toilets, cleaning equipment, PPE and waste management?
9. Are you aware that each school setting should be cleaned once per day?
10. Have you in place a system for regular cleaning of the following frequently touched surfaces?
 - Door handles,
 - Hand rails
 - Chairs/arm rests
 - Communal eating areas
 - Sinks
 - Toilets facilities
11. Have you provided cleaning materials to staff and students so that they can clean their own desk or immediate workspace?
12. Have you advised staff that they are responsible for cleaning personal items that have been brought to work and are likely to be handled at work or during breaks? E.g. mobile phone laptop and to avoid leaving them down on communal surfaces or they will need to clean the surface after the personal item is removed.
13. Have you advised staff and students to avoid sharing items such as cups, bottles, cutlery, pens
14. Have you put in place a written cleaning schedule to be made available to cleaning staff including:
 - Items and areas to be cleaned
 - Frequency of cleaning
 - Cleaning materials to be used

- Equipment to be used and method of operation
- Cleaning of frequently touched surfaces such as vending machines, coffee machines, door handles

15. Details of how to clean following a suspected case of COVID-19 are at **Section 7 of the Plan above** (can be added here again if considered useful)

16. If disinfection of contaminated surfaces is required, is a system in place to do this following cleaning?

17. If cleaning staff have been instructed to wear gloves when cleaning are they aware of the need to wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water, both before and after wearing gloves?

18. Have you a system in place for the disposal of cleaning cloths and used wipes in a rubbish bag?
Current HSE guidance recommends waste such as cleaning waste, tissues etc. from a person suspected of having COVID-19 should be double bagged and stored in a secure area for 72 hours before being presented for general waste collection.

19. Have you ensured there is a system in place to make sure reusable cleaning equipment including mop heads and non-disposable cloths are clean before re-use?

20. Have you ensured there is a system in place to ensure that equipment such as buckets are emptied and cleaned with a fresh solution of disinfectant before re-use?