



Ballincollig Community School

COVID-19 Response Plan

for the safe and sustainable reopening of the school.

Updated:

November 2021

Table of Contents:

- 1) Introduction**
- 2) What is a School COVID-19 Response Plan?**
- 3) School COVID-19 Policy**
- 4) Planning and Preparing for Return to School**
 - 4.1) Induction Training
 - 4.2) Procedure for Reopening the School following closure due to Covid-19 – Staff Returning to Work (RTW)
 - 4.3) Lead Worker Representative (LWR)
 - 4.4) Display signage
 - 4.5) Making changes to school layout
 - 4.6) Update Safety and Risk Assessment
 - 4.7) Access to the School and Contact Log
- 5) Control Measures – To prevent Introduction and Spread of COVID-19 in School**
 - 5.1) Know the Symptoms of COVID-19
 - 5.2) Respiratory Hygiene
 - 5.3) Hand Hygiene
 - 5.4) Physical Distancing
 - 5.5) Use of PPE in School
 - 5.6) Extra Precautionary Measures taken on certain areas in Practical Subjects
- 6) Impact of COVID – 19 on School Activities**
- 7) Hygiene and Cleaning in School**
- 8) Dealing with a suspected case**
- 9) Staff Duties**
- 10) Absence Management**
- 11) Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme**
- 12) Arrangements for Teachers and SNAs for the 2021/22 School Year**

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

Appendix 1

Return to School Information Sheet 2021/22

1) Introduction

The Minister for Education published “The Roadmap for the Full Return to School” in July 2020.

It set out what the operation of schools would look like and the range of supports that would be available in a COVID-19 context. It was 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 was then required to have a COVID-19 Response Plan. In addition to being places of learning, schools are also places of work. The document set out the information that post primary schools need to implement 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 Response Plan is to provide clear and helpful guidance for the safe operation of Ballincollig Community 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 that will be taken in the school to minimise the risk of infection while recognising that no interpersonal activity is without risk of transmission of infection at any time. The documentation and templates in this booklet are supported by the public health advice provided by the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) for the safe reopening of schools and educational facilities.

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 all the steps the school will take to do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into the school and the steps that can be taken to reduce the likelihood of the spread within the school itself in the event that COVID-19 is introduced to the school.

The Department of Education has worked intensively with the education partners to develop consistent plans, advice, protocols and guidance for schools, including the initial School COVID-19 Response Plan.

2) What is a COVID-19 Response Plan?

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

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

It is important that the resumption of school-based teaching and learning and the reopening of schools complies with the public health advice and guidance documents prepared by the Department. Doing so minimises the risk to students, staff and others. The response plan supports the sustainable reopening of school where the overriding objective is to protect the health of staff and students while promoting the educational and development needs of the children in the school.

This 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 opening 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) **Our School COVID-19 Policy**

The Ballincollig Community School COVID-19 Policy outlines the commitment of the school to implement the plan and help prevent the spread of the virus. The policy, when updated, is signed and dated by the chairperson and secretary of the BOM and brought to the attention of the staff, students, parents and others.

4) **Planning and Preparing for Return to School**

The BOM at Ballincollig Community School aims to facilitate the consistency of school-based teaching and learning and the return to the workplace of staff. The return to the workplace must be done safely and in strict adherence to the public health advice and any guidance issued by the Department of Education.

Details for the safe reopening of the school after an unexpected closure due to COVID-19 and the applicable controls are outlined in this document.

Before reopening the school, we 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 update their 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 school's health and safety risk assessment if necessary (***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.

4.1) Induction Training

All staff have undertaken and completed the COVID-19 Induction Training prior to returning to the school building after the very first closure due to COVID-19. The aim of such 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.

If a staff member is unsure about any aspect of the COVID-19 Response Plan, the associated control measures, or his/her duties, he/she should immediately seek guidance from the principal who is supported in this role by the BOM.

4.2) Staff Procedure - Returning to Work (RTW)

As part of the school's COVID-19 Response Plan, staff must complete a COVID19 Return to Work Form and return it to the Deputy Principal following an absence, including after the summer period.

Staff are required to complete the COVID-19 Return to Work Form 3 days in advance of his/her return date to school.

On receipt of the original completed form the principal provided details of the **Induction Training** for completion by staff prior to the return to the workplace after the first closure, 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 were also provided.

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**.

People at very high risk (extremely vulnerable):

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

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

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

4.3) Lead Worker Representative

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

This section sets out how the provisions will operate in respect of our school. These arrangements will be kept under review.

Responsibility for the development and implementation of the COVID-19 Response Plan and the associated control measures lies with the Board of Management/ Education and Training Board and school management.

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

If a staff member has any concerns or observations in relation to the COVID-19 Response Plan, control measures or the adherence to such measures by staff, students or others, they should contact the LWR who will engage with school management.

The role of LWR is separate to that of the Safety Representative under the health and safety legislation. However, the Safety Representative may act as the LWR if selected to do so by the staff.

In summary, the role of the LWR is to:

- Represent all staff in the workplace regardless of role, and be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of different staff cohorts;
- Keep up to date with the latest COVID-19 public health advice;
- Work collaboratively with school management to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19;
- Consult with school management on the control measures required to minimise the risk of staff and students being exposed to COVID-19;
- Promote good hygiene practices, in conjunction with school management, such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette along with maintaining social distancing in accordance with public health advice;
- Assist school management with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace in line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol and current public health advice;
- Monitor, in conjunction with school management, adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19;
- Conduct reviews of safety measures that are in place to address and suppress COVID-19 in the workplace. Reviews (including an examination of the workplace) should be conducted on a regular basis (at least twice per week);
- Report any issues of concern immediately to school management and keep records of such issues and actions taken to rectify them

- Consult with the school management on the school’s COVID-19 Response Plan in the event of someone developing COVID-19 while in school including the location of an isolation area and a safe route to that area;
- Following any incident, assess with the school management any follow up action that is required;
- Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace;
- Make representations to school management on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.

If a staff member has any concerns or observations in relation to the COVID-19 response plan, control measures or the adherence to such measures by staff, students or other s/he should contact the LWR/s who will engage with the Principal/ETB.

Name of Lead Worker Representative:	Contact details:
Denis Kelleher	lwr@balcs.ie

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

4.4) Signage

The Department has provided printed posters to schools with age appropriate key health messages – hand washing, sanitising etc. which are on display throughout the school.

Additional posters have been displayed in prominent areas such as offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilets in the school and in the main reception area.

4.5) Making Changes to School Layout

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

Classrooms and other areas, such as staff room and offices have been reconfigured to support physical distancing in line with the guidance in advance of school reopening.

Staff and students are also instructed to walk on the left side of corridors, and the use of student lockers will be reduced to 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 6th year groups to ease digestion on corridors.

4.6) Health and Safety Risk Assessment

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

The school will review the emergency procedures involving, fire safety, first aid, accidents and dangerous occurrences to consider any new risks that arise due to the school's COVID-19 Response Plan. Any changes to the schools existing emergency procedures will be documented and incorporated into the school's safety statement.

The school will also review the existing risk assessments to consider any new risks that arise due to the school's COVID-19 Response Plan. Any changes to the school's current risk assessments should also be documented and be incorporated into the school's statement.

First Aid/emergency procedure

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

4.7) Access to School and Contact Log

Access to the school building is in line with all the agreed school procedures and must be adhered to. (***Appendix 1 – Return to School Information Sheet***)

Arrangement for necessary visitors such as contractors and parents is restricted to essential purposes and limited to those who have obtained prior approval from the principal. The Department of Education Inspectorate may visit the school to provide support as appropriate in the implementation of public health advice relating to creating a safe learning and working environment for all.

The prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a crucial step in restricting the spread of the virus and protecting the health and safety of the individuals themselves and other staff, contractors and visitors at the workplace. A detailed sign in/sign out log of those entering the school facilities is maintained. The school maintains a log of staff and students contacts.

All school records and data are maintained and processed in compliance with the GDPR and the Data Protection Acts. The responsibility for compliance with the legislation rests with the school in its role as data controller.

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 in Ballincollig CS, is to do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into the school. If infection is not introduced it cannot be spread. The risk of spreading the infection once introduced exists in all interpersonal interactions; student - student, teacher - teacher and teacher-student, and must be managed in all settings.

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

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

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

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

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

- Advise staff and students that have symptoms not to attend school, to phone their doctor and to follow HSE guidance on self-isolation;
- Advise staff and students not to attend school if they have been identified by the HSE as contact for a person with COVID-19 and to follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement;
- Advise staff and students that develop symptoms at school to bring this to the attention of the principal (or a deputy principal if the principal is unavailable) promptly;
- Ensure that staff and students know the protocol for managing a suspected case of COVID-19 in school (**details at Section 8**);
- Advise everyone entering the school building that they need to perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser;
- Advise all relevant parties that visitors to the school during the day should be by prior arrangement with the principal and should be received at a specific contact point;
- Physical distancing of 2 metres should be maintained between staff and visitors where possible.

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

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

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

5.2) Respiratory Hygiene

Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with a mask.

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

Ventilation in classrooms and the school in general should be provided where at all possible – ie. Opening of windows, external doors etc.

5.3) Hand Hygiene

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

The school promotes good hygiene and displays posters throughout the schools on how to wash your hands.

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

Use of hand hygiene facilities including wash hand basins needs to be managed so as to avoid congregation of people waiting to use wash hand basins and hand sanitisers.

Hand sanitiser dispensers are located at exit and entry points of the school and classrooms.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Frequency of Hand Hygiene

Students and staff should perform hand hygiene:

- On arrival at school;
- On entry and exit to every classroom;
- Before eating or drinking;
- After using the toilet;
- After petting animals;
- After playing outdoors;
- When their hands are physically dirty;

The Department of Education has provided funding for the costs associated with the hand sanitising and PPE requirements in schools.

5.4) Physical Distancing

Physical distancing can be usefully applied in school, 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 1m distance and where possible 2m. They should also take measures to avoid close contact at face-to-face level such as remaining standing rather than sitting beside/crouching down.

Physical distancing falls into two categories:

- Increasing separation
- Decreasing interaction

Increasing separation

The suite of measures ready to be put in place as required in BCS are:

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

Decreasing interaction

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

Hand washing and/or sanitising is required when moving between classes by teachers and students and on entrance and exiting of classrooms.

Physical distancing between the teacher and class would be observed.

Where movement of class groups between rooms is required, it should be planned to minimise interaction with other class groups. Students will walk on the left-hand side of corridors.

Limit interaction on arrival and departure and in hallways and other shared areas.

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

Staff and students must avoid sharing of personal items.

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

All surfaces must be fully wiped down at the start and end of every class.

Physical Distancing outside of the classroom and within the school

School drop off/collection

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

Student year group groups must enter the school through the external in their designated area.

Students should head straight to their designated learning space/classroom.

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.

Staff meetings will be held remotely on Teams.

A no hand shaking policy.

Gatherings at the beginning or end of the school day are discouraged.

Canteen

Ensure physical distancing in the area.

The canteen shop will remain closed.

Corridors and Stairwells

Students must walk on the left-hand side of corridors.

5.5) Use of PPE in Schools

PPE will need to be used constantly due to the nature of teaching/learning.

Appropriate PPE will be readily available for dealing with suspected COVID-19 cases, intimate care needs and for first aid.

Masks

Staff, Students and all visitors will wear masks properly for the duration of the school day.

Students have been made aware that wearing a cloth face covering is not to protect themselves but to reduce onward transmission of COVID 19 and the benefit is reliant on wearing the covering appropriately.

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

For staff, Face Shields are inadequate in stopping the spread of infection.

Gloves

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

Routine use of disposable gloves is not a substitute for hand hygiene but gloves are readily available in the school.

5.6) Extra Precautionary Measures taken in certain Areas & Practical Subjects

Library Policy

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

P.E.

- We sanitise all equipment before class and students wipe down equipment after use.
- That equipment is then stored separate to the rest and is only put back into original places after being sprayed again.
- Everything in the store room is sprayed with Dettol spray after each class.
- No students are allowed into the store room as it is a confined space that we need to keep in order.
- Masks are worn at all times inside the PE facilities.
- If students can distance themselves outside then we allow them to take off their mask.

Art

- All large equipment, machines, and hand tools are to be cleaned/sanitised after the last lesson each day.
- For each individual lesson, the cleaning (with disinfectant wipes) of desks, chairs, machines and tools that are used should be undertaken by the students

- Where possible, students should have individual art-packs with everyday tools and materials.
- Where practical, students should only use the tools/equipment assigned to them and should not interchange these with other students.
- For the preparation and handling of student materials such as clay, drawing boards, paper and paint, teachers should wear gloves to avoid direct contact, where it is safe to do so. Gloves should be disposed of after each use. A similar approach should be taken when handing out materials to students and collecting materials or work from them.
- To avoid crowding around storage areas, students should leave wet work on their desks at the end of a lesson for teachers to place on drying racks. Teachers should distribute students' work-in-progress at the beginning of lessons, taking appropriate steps to avoid direct contact.

Music

- Students are advised to bring their own instruments to school. If using school instruments must they sanitise them before and after performances.
- Students must stay 2 metres apart while performing.
- 10 minutes max is advised for singing and playing wind instruments.
- Students cannot sing or play face to face. Must perform back to back or side to side.
- Air the room after playing and singing.
- Large school choirs and school bands are not possible so practical performances have been reduced down to solo performances.
- The practical component of the subject has really suffered due to Covid 19 and students have missed out on this element.

Wood Technology / Engineering / Graphics / Technology

- Tools/equipment are sanitised before class and students wipe down tools/equipment after use, using a special spray that protects the materials of the tools etc. from deterioration caused by regular surface wipes.
- Extra desks are added to some rooms to create more space between the students working in the practical environment
- Demonstrations will be done on camera, projected to the class, rather than students gathering around the teacher.

Science

- During a practical class, equipment is collected by each student from the back of the room, one at a time, rather than as a large group
- Each seat has their own box of equipment containing commonly used apparatus
- The apparatus in the student boxes are sanitised before use
- Before returning the equipment to the boxes they are sanitised again
- When using the microscope, the students wipe both the lens and the dials before allowing another student to use it
- No student is allowed leave their designated space during a practical class
- At the end of class, students wipe down the laboratory benches and around the skins with sanitising wipes
- Group Practical Activities with shared equipment are avoided
- Certain experiment work cannot be completed

Home Economics

- We sanitise the desks, unit handles, counters, sinks and taps after each use.
- Students must sanitise and wash hands with warm water and soap before starting to cook/bake and continue to do so regularly throughout the lesson.
- Students must stay at their assigned desks/sinks at all times during a practical lesson. They cannot move around.
- Extractor fans are switched on to their maximum capacity, as well as windows and doors being open to ensure maximum ventilation.
- During a cookery lesson, all ingredients used are cooked to ensure any possible viruses etc if present are destroyed.
- Students must bring in their own towels and aprons, as well as their ingredients.
- Students must wear a mask at all times during a practical lesson.

6) Impact of COVID-19 on certain school activities

All extra-curricular will be ran in line with government restrictions where necessary.

After School Study will return and run as it did before the Covid-19 pandemic.

7) Hygiene and Cleaning in Schools

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

The school is deep cleaned every evening. This includes touched surfaces – door handles, hand rails, chairs/arm rests, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities.

As students are moving between classrooms, appropriate cleaning products are being provided to enable them to wipe down their desk, chair and surface before leaving the room.

All staff have access to cleaning products and are required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area. Under no circumstances should these cleaning materials be removed from the building.

Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day.

Shower facilities shall not be available for use by staff or students due to the increased risk associated with communal shower facilities and areas. This shall be reviewed in line with government guidance.

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

- The rooms should be cleaned as soon as possible.
- Once the room is vacated, it should not be reused until it has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry.
- Disinfection only works on things that are clean, therefore when disinfection is required it is always in addition to cleaning.
- Person/s assigned to cleaning should avoid touching their face while they are cleaning and wear household gloves and a plastic apron.
- Clean the environment and furniture using disposable cleaning cloths and a household detergent followed by disinfection with a chlorine-based product (household bleach).
- Pay special attention to frequently touched surfaces, the back of chairs, couches, door handles and any surfaces that are visibly soiled with body fluids.
- Once the room has been cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry, the room can be reused.

8) Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19

Staff or students should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of COVID-19.

The following outlines how the school would deal with a suspected case that may arise.

A designated isolation area is provided in the school's **First Aid room – A015**.

This designated isolation area is behind a closed door and away from other staff and students.

If a staff member/student displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, the following are the procedures to be implemented:

- If the person with the suspected case is a student, the parents/guardians should be contacted immediately;
- Isolate the person in **A015** and follow the procedure in place to accompany the individual to the designated isolation area via the isolation route, keeping at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic person at all times;
- 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.
- If the person is well enough to go home, arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible and advise them to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used;
- If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a COVID-19 suspect;
- Carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery;
- Arrange for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved – (**details at Section 7**)

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

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/RTW update before they return to work after an unexpected closure due to Covid-19.
- 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 have completed the COVID-19 Induction Training.
- Must be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette. Coordinate practices and work with their colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained.
- Make themselves aware of the symptoms of COVID-19 and monitor their own wellbeing.
- Self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any symptoms of COVID-19.
- Not return to or attend school if they have symptoms of COVID-19 under any circumstances.
- Adhere to the procedure outlined above if they develop any symptoms of COVID-19 whilst within the school facility.
- Keep themselves informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.

10) COVID-19 related absence management

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

11) Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

All information from the Department of Education re: literature / courses / webinars and presentations to promote staff wellbeing in schools will be forwarded to staff.

12) Arrangements for Teachers and SNAs for the 2021/22 School Year

The most up to date information for schools at the beginning of the 2021/22 school year is Circular 0042/2021 Coronavirus (COVID-19): Arrangements for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants employed in recognised Primary and Post Primary schools.