**Background**

COVID-19 (Coronavirus) is a highly infectious respiratory virus. The school was closed by declaration of An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar from March 13th, 2020, initially for a period of two weeks, but thereafter “until further notice”.

This response plan has been drawn up in light of the [Return to Work Safely Protocol](https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/Return-to-Work-Safely-Protocol.pdf), in order to facilitate staff accessing the school building on and after May 18th, 2020. Such access is governed by the government’s phased [Roadmap for Reopening Society & Business](https://assets.gov.ie/73722/ffd17d70fbb64b498fd809dde548f411.pdf).

This Response Plan may be expanded at a later date in order to facilitate pupils returning to school. Such expansion will be informed by public health and national guidance.

**Risk Assessment & Amelioration**

Exposure to COVID-19 is a public health risk which affects all citizens. The virus that causes COVID-19 disease is spread from people in fluid and in droplets scattered from the nose or mouth of an infected person when the person with COVID-19 coughs, sneezes or speaks. The fluid or droplets land on objects and surfaces around the infected person. Other people contaminate their hands by touching these objects or surfaces and then bring the virus into contact with their eyes, nose or mouth by touching them with their contaminated hands.

COVID-19 can also spread if droplets from an infected person land directly on the mucous membranes of the eye, nose or mouth of a person standing close to them. It is still not known how long the virus survives on surfaces in different conditions.

The period of survival may vary under different conditions (e.g. type of surface, temperature or humidity of the environment). Studies indicate that it can persist on surfaces for hours and up to several days in the absence of effective cleaning.

While people are most likely to pass on the infection when they have symptoms, current information suggests that some infected people spread the virus to others prior to developing or displaying symptoms themselves.

Public health guidance is that a distance of 2m should be maintained between people to reduce the potential of transferring the virus.

At present, mask-wearing is not indicated.

Staff will familiarise themselves with the [symptoms of COVID-19 infection](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/symptoms.html).

Where a staff member has symptoms of COVID-19, they are to self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice. They must also communicate this to the principal.

Staff will only congregate outside the school building, and maintain a 2m minimum distance.

When there is more than one person in the corridor you must maintain 2m distance (max of 4 people) at any one time. Staff may use toilets attached to their own classrooms, and are to wash their hands at regular intervals.

Staff are requested to bring own cups, utensils, towels etc for use while in school.

Staff are to spend as little time as possible on the premises.

Staff are required to self-regulate, in relation to any personal individual risk factors, and inform the principal that they are not attending school. In such instances, staff may attend school in their own time, when they are assured that nobody else is present. This must be notified to the principal.

The principal and deputy principal will keep a log of who was on the premises, when, and for how long, to assist with contact tracing as necessary. A log book for signing in is kept inside main door on table. Put in date, name, entry time and exit time. ( Please remember to use own pen)

**Assessment**

The school will compile a questionnaire in line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol section E subsection 4.

Staff will complete the questionnaire at least 3 days before attending the school building. If a staff member answers Yes to any of the questions, they are strongly advised to follow the medical advice they receive or seek medical advice before returning to work.

Staff will 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 allow their safe return to the school.

**Training**

Before September 1st, the staff will participate in induction training in relation to COVID-19. This training will include the latest up to-date advice and guidance on public health: what a person should do if they develop symptoms of COVID-19; details of how the workplace is organised to address the risk from COVID-19; an outline of the COVID-19 response plan; identification of points of contact

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

As outlined above, a staff member who has symptoms of COVID-19 should not attend the school premises. However, COVID-19 may have a rapid onset. Where a staff member realises that they are symptomatic while on the school site, they should immediately close the internal door of the room in which they are. Due to the risk amelioration outlined above, they will be alone in the room.

The staff member should contact the principal immediately, whether by mobile phone call, or message.

The principal will escort the staff member to their transport, advising that they contact their GP en route home; the principal and staff member will maintain a 2m social distance at all times.

Where the staff member does not have personal transport at the school, they will remain in the room with the window open until a family member arrives to collect them. The staff member will be facilitated to contact their GP during this time.

**Contact with Confirmed Cases**

If a confirmed case is identified in the school, staff who have had close contact will be asked to stay at home for 14 days from the last time they had contact with the confirmed case and follow the [restricted movements guidance on the HSE website](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/managing-coronavirus-at-home/self-isolation.html).

If the person develops new symptoms or their existing symptoms worsen within their 14-day observation period, they should call their doctor for reassessment.

Personnel who have been in close contact with a confirmed case include:

* any individual who has had greater than 15 minutes face-to-face (<2 meters distance) contact with a confirmed case, in any setting
* household contacts
* passengers on an aircraft sitting within two seats (in any direction) of a confirmed case, travel companions or persons providing care, and crew members serving in the section of the aircraft where the index case was seated
* for those contacts who have shared a space with a confirmed case for >2 hours, a risk assessment will be undertaken under HSE/Public Health advice taking into consideration the size of the room, ventilation and the distance from the case. This may include office and training settings and any sort of large conveyance

Personnel who have been in casual contact with a confirmed case include:

* any individual who has shared a closed space with a confirmed case for less than two hours
* Passengers on an aircraft sitting beyond two seats (in any direction) of a confirmed case
* Any individual who has shared a closed space with a confirmed case for longer than two hours, but following risk assessment, does not meet the definition of a close contact

**Cleaning**

Should a staff member develop symptoms while on site, or be a suspected/confirmed case of COVID-19, cleaning protocols as outlined in the [NSAI Guidelines](https://www.nsai.ie/images/uploads/general/NSAI-Guidelines-for-COVID-19-2020-04-09.pdf) chapter 4 section 6 will be followed:

* *Keep the door to the room closed for at least one hour before cleaning*
* *Do not use the room until the room has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry*
* *The person assigned to clean the area should avoid touching his/her face while they are cleaning and should wear household or disposable single use non-sterile nitrile gloves.*
* *Open the window while he/she is cleaning*
* *Clean the environment and the furniture using disposable cleaning cloths and a household detergent followed or combined with Chlorine based product such as sodium hypochlorite (often referred to as household bleach). Chlorine based products are available in different formats including wipes*
* *Pay special attention to frequently touched flat surfaces, the backs of chairs, couches, door handles, taps of washbasins, toilet handles, and any surfaces or items that are visibly soiled with body fluids*
* *Place all waste that has been in contact with the person, including used tissues, in a plastic rubbish bag, along with gloves, and clean his/her hands. Place the plastic bag into a second bin bag and tie it, then clean his/her hands again*
* *Store the bag in a safe place in cleaner’s room until the result of the test is available.*
* *If the test result is negative, place the waste in the normal domestic waste bin*
* *In the event the test result is positive, Public Health will advise what to do next*
* *If the person spent time in a communal area or they used the toilet or bathroom facilities, then these areas should be cleaned with household detergent followed by a disinfectant (as outlined above) as soon as is practicably possible*
* *Once the room has been cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry, the room can be put back into use*
* *There is no need to clean carpets (if present) unless there has been a spillage*