



Loreto College

St. Stephen's Green



Table of Contents:

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

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

Appendices

- Appendix 1** Template COVID-19 School Policy Statement
- Appendix 2** Pre-Return to Work Questionnaire COVID-19
- Appendix 3** Lead Worker Representative
- Appendix 4** Risk Assessment
- Appendix 5** School Contact Tracing Log
- Appendix 6** Data Protection
- Appendix 7** HSE Guidelines for handwashing
- Appendix 8** Checklist for School Managers
- Appendix 9** Checklist for Managing a Suspected Case of COVID-19
- Appendix 10** Checklist for Lead Worker Representative
- Appendix 11** Checklist for Cleaning


1) Introduction – A note from the principal

We are looking forward to welcoming our staff and students back to Loreto College St. Stephen's Green. The school has been very quiet and I must admit a little eerie without the sound of students, teachers and staff echoing along the corridors. A lot of time has been spent working on fulfilling the requirements for the safe return to school of all members of our school community. We all have to take time to adjust to our new reality and be patient with ourselves and others as we navigate our way through the initial phase of the reopening of the school.

School life will be very different for all of us. We will all have to undertake a significant culture shift and stay home if we are unwell, this includes all staff and students. However, we are at heart a very resilient community. We will adapt to our new reality, we will find ways to fulfil our mission statement. "In an atmosphere of mutual respect and justice, we are a community that aims to provide a rich and diverse curriculum catering for the needs of each individual student. We provide a holistic education wherein we strive for excellence in the pursuit of knowledge. Social concerns and spiritual values are central to our educational philosophy, while sporting and cultural endeavours are encouraged. Each student is challenged to realise her full potential and to recognise the dignity of each human being".

Our hallways, classrooms and workrooms will once again be filled with the sounds of teaching and learning, of laughter and the sounds of Joy. In the words of Elizabeth O'Connor, Cry Pain, Cry Hope "We are not powerless in the oppressive situations in which we feel caught. We are not bound to the reality we see. We are creators. We can make the new."

We must at all times abide by the DES and Public Health guidelines. This document is a living document and may be updated and amended at any time.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jackie Dempsey". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name of the principal.

Principal

2) What is a COVID-19 Response Plan?

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

The COVID-19 Response Plan details the policies and practices necessary for 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 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

A COVID-19 policy outlines the commitment of the school to implement the plan and help prevent the spread of the virus. The policy will be signed and dated by the chairperson and principal 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 aims to facilitate the resumption of school based teaching and learning and the return to the workplace of staff. The return to the workplace must be done safely and in strict adherence to the public health advice and any guidance issued by the Department of Education.

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 the school will need to 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.

There are checklists in place to assist schools on the details of what is needed for these arrangements in the appendices of this plan.

4.1) Induction Training

All staff will undertake and complete COVID-19 Induction Training prior to returning to the school building. The aim of such training is to ensure that the staff has 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.

Note: Induction Training for reopening schools in the new school year is under development by the Department. This will be made available to all schools and staff in advance of school reopening.

A national information campaign to support parents and students will happen in advance of schools reopening on issues such as COVID-19 awareness and to help minimise the risk of introduction and spread of the virus in schools.

4.2) Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)

In order to return to the workplace, staff must complete a **Return to Work (RTW)** form, which is available electronically or from the principal. A hard copy is attached also at **Appendix 2**.

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

On receipt of the completed form the principal will provide details of the **Induction Training** for completion by staff prior to the return to the workplace and details of any additional health and safety measures in place in the school to facilitate the staff member's return to the school facility.

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

People at very high risk (extremely vulnerable):

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

- are over 70 years of age – even if fit and well
- have had an organ transplant
- are undergoing active chemotherapy for cancer
- are having radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
- have cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
- are having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
- are having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors

- have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
- have severe respiratory conditions including cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, pulmonary fibrosis, lung fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and severe COPD
- have a condition that means they have a very high risk of getting infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell)
- are taking medicine that makes you much more likely to get infections (such as high doses of steroids or immunosuppression therapies)
- have a serious heart condition and are pregnant

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

4.3) Lead Worker Representative

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

This section sets out how the provisions will operate in respect of schools. These arrangements will operate for the 2020/21 school year and will be kept under review.

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

Names of Lead Worker Representative/s:	Contact details:
Jennifer Maverley	j.maverley@loretothegreen.ie
Grainne Madden	library@loretothegreen.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.

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

4.4) Signage

Schools will be required to display signage outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene. The Department will provide printed posters to schools with age appropriate key health messages – hand washing, sneeze and cough etiquette etc.

Note: Signage is under development by the Department. This will be made available to all schools and staff in advance of school reopening.

[The signage, once it becomes available, will be found here.](#)

Schools can then arrange to display the posters in prominent areas such as offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilets.

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.*”

Schools are required to reconfigure classrooms and other areas to support physical distancing in line with the guidance in advance of school reopening.

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 school settings is attached at **Appendix 4**

It is important that schools review their 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 should be documented and incorporated into the school’s safety statement.

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

First Aid/emergency procedure

The standard First Aid/emergency procedure shall continue to apply in schools. 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 will be in line with agreed school procedures.

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

The prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a crucial step in restricting the spread of the virus and protecting the health and safety of the individuals themselves and other staff, contractors and visitors at the workplace. A detailed sign in/sign out log of those entering the school facilities should be maintained. The school should maintain a log of staff and students contacts. A sample contact log is available at **Appendix 5**.

The Data Protection Commission has provided guidance on the data protection implications of the return to work protocols. This advice can be found here in **Appendix 6**.

All school records and data will be maintained and processed in compliance with the GDPR and the Data Protection Acts. The responsibility for compliance with the legislation rests with each school (or ETB) in their 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 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 deputy principal if the principal is unavailable) promptly;
- Ensure that staff and students know the protocol for managing a suspected case of COVID-19 in school (**details at Section 8**);
- Advise everyone entering the school building that they need to perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser;
- Advise all relevant parties that visitors to the school during the day should be by prior arrangement with the principal and should be received at a specific contact point;
- Physical distancing of 2 metres should be maintained between staff and visitors where possible.

5.1) Know the Symptoms of COVID-19

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

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

5.2) Respiratory Hygiene

Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your bent elbow when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately and safely into a nearby bin.

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

5.3) Hand Hygiene

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

Schools should promote good hygiene and display posters throughout the schools on how to wash your hands. Follow the HSE guidelines on handwashing: **Appendix 7**.

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

Warm water is available for hand washing in all bathrooms and sinks.

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

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

Hot air dryers are an acceptable alternative for hand drying and are 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.

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

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

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

Frequency of Hand Hygiene

Students and staff should perform hand hygiene:

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

5.4) Physical Distancing

Physical distancing can be usefully applied in a post primary school setting allowing for some flexibility when needed. It is applied in a practical way to recognise that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on this issue. Care will be taken to avoid generating tension or potential conflict and some flexibility in the implementation of measures may be required.

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 lay layout (iii) available space within the school; and (iv) student numbers; schools themselves are best placed to decide on the appropriate reconfigurations / operational changes necessary to maintain physical distancing.

In recognition that a 'one size fits all' approach would not be appropriate as schools themselves are best placed to decide on the appropriate configuration for their school, the Department has developed a *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*. The Framework sets out a suite of available measures that must be implemented at individual school level to the greatest possible extent.

The suite of measures set out in the Framework are:

1. Reconfigure class spaces to maximise physical distancing;
2. Utilising and reconfiguring all available space in the school in order to maximise physical distancing;

3. Review Timetables;
4. Reconfiguring Classes;
5. Consider Use of Live Streaming within the School; and
6. Accessing available spaces within the local community

Areas within the school have been reconfigured as temporary classrooms and within the guidelines of 2m separation for the teacher from the students and 1m separation of students. Live streaming of classes will be facilitated especially for teachers and students in specialist rooms which could not be reconfigured. Teachers will use a rota system to ensure that all students experience teaching and learning in the specialist room with the teacher.

Decreasing interaction

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

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

As far as possible and practical, students will remain in the classroom and teachers will move between rooms. A one way system around the school will be in operation. As far as possible and practical students will be assigned to a main class cohort which will remain in the classroom for most subjects, with teachers moving between rooms.

Where possible and practical double classes are planned to minimise movement during the day.

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

Hand washing and/or sanitising will be required when moving between classes by teachers and students. Wipes will be available for the sanitising of desks and chairs by students and teachers.

Physical distancing between the teacher and class will be observed.

Where movement of class groups between rooms is required it will be planned to minimise interaction with other class groups.

Interaction on arrival and departure and in hallways and other shared areas will be minimised.

Social physical contact (hand to hand greetings, hugs) is discouraged.

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

Staff and students will avoid sharing of personal items.

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

Physical Distancing outside of the classroom and within the school

School drop off/collection

Walking/cycling to school will be encouraged as much as possible. A safe area to store bicycles will be provided to staff and students.

The aim of any arrangements is to avoid congregation of people at the school gates where physical distancing requirements may not be respected.

Four entrance/exit routes will be utilised to prevent congregation of staff and students.

Students should head straight to their designated 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.

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

At post primary level consideration could be given to formation of staff “pods” or teams who work together and take breaks together.

Staff meetings will be held remotely or in small groups to facilitate physical distancing.

The school will implement a no hand shaking policy.

Staff will minimise gathering at the beginning or end of the school day. The work room or other space designate for teachers will not be available after school.

Lunch break

The canteen will not be available for the 2020/21 academic year as the space has been reconfigured into a classroom.

Staggered lunch breaks have been scheduled to minimise interaction. Students will eat their lunch in the classroom or may eat outside 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.

5.5) Use of PPE in Schools

Masks

It is recommended that teachers, staff and students attending secondary schools 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 shall be considered, for example staff interacting with students with hearing difficulties or learning difficulties

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

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

School will have additional disposable face coverings available for students, teachers, and staff in case a back-up face covering is needed during the day. Whilst staff and students may wish to utilise their own face covering on a day-to-day basis, the schools will have available a stock of additional disposable or multi-use face coverings available in case a back-up face covering is needed throughout the day or where required on an ongoing basis.

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

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

Gloves

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

Routine use of disposable gloves is not a substitute for hand hygiene.

6) Impact of COVID-19 on certain school activities

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

Choir/Music Performance

Choir practices/performances and music practices/performances involving wind instruments may pose a higher level of risk and special consideration should be given to how they are held ensuring that the room is well-ventilated and the distance between performers is maintained.

Sport Activities

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

Shared Equipment

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

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

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

Library Policy – The school librarian will follow the guidelines provided by HPSC. The library will be maintained by the librarian according to the appropriate guidelines. Online borrowing will be facilitated by the school librarian.

Students should be encouraged to perform hand hygiene after using any shared item.

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

7) Hygiene and Cleaning in Schools

The contract cleaning company Eco Cleaning will provide extra cleaning and will follow the specific advice in relation to school cleaning as 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. The Board of Management will employ a full time cleaner for the 2020/21 school year to regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces including door handles, hand rails, kitchen areas, hand washing and toilet facilities.

The school shall be cleaned at **least once per day**.

When students are moving between classrooms wipes will be provided to enable them to wipe down their desk, chair and surface before leaving the room.

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

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

There will be regular collection of used waste disposal bags from offices and other areas within the school facility.

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

Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.).

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

The rooms shall be cleaned as soon as possible.

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

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

Person/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).

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 a school should deal with a suspected case that may arise in a school setting.

A designated isolation area should be identified within the school building. The possibility of having more than one person displaying signs of COVID-19 shall be considered and a contingency plan for dealing with additional cases put in place. The designated isolation area shall be 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 will be contacted immediately;

- Isolate the person and a procedure is in place to accompany the individual to the designated isolation area via the isolation route, keeping at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic person at all times;
- The isolation area in Loreto College is the old Year Head's office;
- 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;
- A staff member caring for a student shall wear a face covering or mask. Gloves should not be used as the virus does not pass through skin;
- A mask will be provided for the person presenting with symptoms. An isolation pack containing mask, sanitiser, tissues, and gloves is available in the isolation room. He/she shall; wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises;
- An assessment will be made 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;
- The person presenting with symptoms will remain in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and they will be facilitate to allow them contact their doctor. The individual shall avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. Advice shall be given to the person presenting with symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bag provided;
- If the person is well enough to go home, arrangements will be made 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 shall not be used;
- If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, contact with the emergency services on 999 or 112 will be made and they will be informed that the sick person is a COVID-19 suspect;
- An assessment of the incident will be carried out which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery;
- Arrangements will be made for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved – (**details at Section 7**)

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

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 has a key role to play.

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

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

10) COVID-19 related absence management

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

11) Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

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

Occupational Health Service. The Employee Assistance Service (EAS) is provided by Spectrum.Life under the logo of 'Wellbeing Together: Folláinne Le Chéile'.

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

