

COVID 19 RESPONSE PLAN.

BOYNE COMMUNITY SCHOOL



Boyne Community School
2020/21

Contents

Introduction

The COVID-19 Response Plan details the policies and practices necessary for the school to meet the Government's 'Return to Work Safely Protocol' and to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. The plan will give an overview of key areas that employers must assess to ensure compliance with the protocol and to minimise the risk to workers and others.

The plan needs strong commitment from management and all members of the school community, it should be developed and put in place in consultation with all stakeholders.

Note: The plan is a live working document and it should be reviewed on an ongoing basis and amended to take into account new guidance from www.Gov.ie, www.dbei.ie, www.hse.ie, www.hpsc.ie, www.hsa.ie

The COVID-19 Response Plan will detail how the school will put in place control measures to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19. The plan will address the following;

- ❖ Planning and Preparing
- ❖ Control Measures to Prevent Infection
- ❖ COVID-19 Induction
- ❖ Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19
- ❖ Cleaning and Disinfection
- ❖ Employees
- ❖ Worker Representative(s)

As required two Lead Worker Representatives have been appointed in the school. Aoife Daly and Mark Whittington are taking on this role. Any queries in relation to Covid 19 should be addressed to Aoife, Mark or a member of the Senior Management Team.

The role of this LWR is to;

- provide up-to-date reliable information to employees;
- clarify the school's procedures and policies;
- ensure central visibility regarding responding to Covid 19;

An email address has been set up to facilitate communication of concerns etc- this is covidquestions@boynecs.ie

Aoife and Mark will establish a google folder that will allow them keep staff informed as regards concerns raised and measures taken to address any issues.

This document does not/can not address every possible situation and staff are asked to take responsibility to mitigate any risks to both themselves and others. Staff are also asked to inform the Covid 19 Team and/or management if they identify any unaddressed risks.

COVID 19 Policy Statement

Boyne Community School is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all members of our school community. To ensure that, we have developed the following COVID-19 Response Plan. All members of our school community are responsible for the implementation of this plan and a combined effort will help contain the spread of the virus.

We will:

- continue to monitor our COVID-19 response and amend this plan in consultation with all members of our school community
- provide up to date information to all members of our school community on the Public Health advice issued by the HSE and Gov.ie
- display information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and correct hand-washing techniques
- provide an adequate number of trained Worker Representative(s) who are easily identifiable and put in place a reporting system
- inform all members of our school community of essential hygiene and respiratory etiquette and physical distancing requirements
- adapt the school environment to facilitate physical distancing
- keep a log of activity on the school premises to help with contact tracing
- have all members of our school community attend an induction briefing
- develop a procedure to be followed in the event of someone showing symptoms of COVID-19 while at work or on the school premises
- provide instructions for all members of our school community to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during the day
- intensify cleaning in line with government advice

All members of our school community will be consulted on an ongoing basis and feedback is encouraged on any concerns, issues or suggestions. This can be done through the Worker Representative(s) Aoife Daly, Mark Whittington and the Senior Management Team.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

On behalf of the Board of Management

Responsible Persons Task Register (Non-Exhaustive)			
NO	TASKS (non-exhaustive list)	RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S)	SIGNATURE
1	Person responsible for overall implementation of the plan		
2	Identification and training of worker representative		
3	Planning and Preparing to Return to Work (Checklist No.1)		
4	Control Measures (Checklist No.2)		
5	COVID-19 Induction (Checklist No.3)		
6	Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19 (Checklist No.4)		
7	Cleaning and Disinfection (Checklist No.5)		
8	Employee Information (Checklist No.6)		
9	Worker Representative(s) (Checklist No.7)		
10	Return-to-work forms		
11	Other		
12			
13			

Planning and Preparing

The planning and preparing phase is critical to ensure a safe return to work and covers such items as information and guidance, return- to- work forms, identifying worker representatives, revising our induction briefing, identifying and putting in place control measures and updating our safety statements, risk assessments and emergency plans.

All members of the school community have been told to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19, which have been explained to them, and the return-to-work form will be used to assess staff health before they enter the workplace. This form must be completed and returned three days prior to returning to work. Members of the school community are also requested to inform the school 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 work.

All members of the school community will complete induction training prior to return to the school. This training will address the following;

- Signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- How COVID-19 is spread.
- Cleaning routines and hygiene controls (including respiratory hygiene, cough etiquette and handwashing and physical distancing).
- Use of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) as relevant.
- What to do if an employee or a member of the public becomes unwell and believe they have been exposed to COVID-19.
- When individuals in the workplace have had contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- Cleaning offices and public spaces where there are suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19.
- Rubbish disposal, including tissues.
- Travel Restrictions
- Restricted movement Advice.
- Familiarising key staff with the COVID-19 plan

A record will be kept of staff training.

Control Measures to Prevent Infection

This section deals with the measures we are implementing to prevent or minimise the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace and in our communities. Measures which must be complied with include:

- Hand hygiene/Hand sanitising
- Respiratory hygiene
- Social / Physical distancing
- Minimising contact
- Considering At-risk workers
- Visiting Contractors / Others

Advice on Hand hygiene/Hand sanitising, Respiratory hygiene and Social / Physical distancing will all be addressed in induction for all members of the school community. It is important that all members of the school community recognise the role they play in maintaining a safe teaching and learning environment.

If an at risk or vulnerable staff member cannot work from home and must be in the workplace, the Board must make sure that they are preferentially supported to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres. However, all attempts will be exhausted to allow vulnerable staff to work from home where possible.

Visitors to the school will be minimised. All visitors must report to reception and complete the visitor to school premises form. This is to assist in contact tracing if necessary. Visitors will be advised to comply with all Health and Safety advice while on the school premises.

COVID-19 Induction

Induction training will be provided to all members of the school community. This training can be accessed at <https://youtu.be/UBrwYokvdvk>

All members of the school community will also be advised to refer to the latest public health advisories issued by HSE, Gov.ie and other government agencies as the situation evolves.

Symptoms of COVID-19

The following symptoms may develop in the 14 days after exposure to someone who has COVID-19 infection:

- Cough,
 - Difficulty in breathing,
 - Fever (38.0° C [100.4° F] or greater using an oral thermometer)
- Loss of taste or smell

Spread of COVID-19

From what is known about other coronaviruses, the spread of COVID-19 is most likely to happen when there is close contact with an infected person. It is likely that the risk increases the longer someone has close contact with an infected person.

Respiratory secretions produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes containing the virus are most likely to be the main means of transmission.

There are 2 main routes by which people can spread COVID-19:

- infection can be spread to people who are nearby (within 2 metres) or possibly could be inhaled into the lungs,
- it is also possible that someone may become infected by touching a surface, object or the hand of an infected person that has been contaminated with respiratory secretions and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes (such as touching contaminated surfaces (e.g. door knob) or shaking hands then touching own face).

How to defend against the spread of COVID-19



Hygiene practices

The hygiene practices implemented by all members of the school community are important to prevent spread of COVID-19. The school will put up appropriate signage on the premises and generally communicate the HSE recommendations to prevent infection spread. All members of the school community are asked to familiarise themselves with the following practices.

Hand washing

Wash hands properly and regularly and especially:

- After coughing or sneezing and after toilet use;
- Before eating;
- If in contact with a sick person, especially those with respiratory symptoms.

It is important to follow good practices for hand washing which include using soap and water and washing for over 20 seconds – see HSE recommendations for hand washing: <https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html>.

Touching of the face should be avoided. Regular hand washing with soap and water is effective for the removal of COVID-19. Between washing use of hand sanitisers (70% alcohol base) is recommended.

Mouth covering

Cover mouth when coughing and sneezing. Cover your nose and mouth with disposable tissues. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your arm or sleeve (not hand), put used tissues into a bin and then wash your hands.

It is mandatory to wear a mouth covering in enclosed spaces and/ or when maintaining social distance of 2m is not practical.

Physical distancing

Introduction of physical distancing measures will be implemented across all settings.

This can be achieved in a number of ways and include:

- workplace signage.
- keeping a distance of 2 metres (6.5 feet) between you and others;
- avoiding making close contact with people (i.e. do not shake hands);
- implementing a queue management system with correct distance markings;
- restricting/staggering the use of canteen facilities (bringing food/drinks to people);
- removing tables/chairs from the canteen and restricting the number of staff per table;
- use of technology for video/virtual meetings;
- limiting the number of meetings including length and proximity of gatherings between employees/others;

Practical Steps for the Deployment of Good Ventilation Practices in Schools

The Roadmap for the Full Return to School incorporates all the detailed guidance documents and communication materials which are referenced (but not necessarily replicated) in the summary document, all of which are available at www.gov.ie/backtoschool. This includes the public health advice from the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) and the Return to Work Safely Protocol developed by the Health & Safety Authority.

The Public Health Advice for the re-opening of schools and educational facilities makes two specific references to ventilation practices which schools should consider, and if appropriate to their specific school context, implement

“Consider if room ventilation especially in classrooms can be improved without causing discomfort. Where possible the opening of doors and windows should be encouraged to increase natural ventilation” (Section 5.6 Environmental Hygiene); and

“Increase air flow and ventilation where climate allows (open windows, use air conditioning where available, etc.)” (Section 8.1, checklists for School Management, Teachers and Staff)

In addition, section 7 of the Return to Work Safely Protocol notes that Air conditioning is not generally considered as contributing significantly to the spread of COVID-19. Switching off air conditioning is not required to manage the risk of COVID-19. For organisations without air conditioning adequate ventilation is encouraged, for example, by opening windows where feasible etc.

The completion and implementation of the COVID-19 Response Plan by a school is the means through which schools can best prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 and demonstrate that they are operating in accordance with the requirements of the Roadmap, the Public Health advice and the Return to Work Protocol, and other detailed guidance provided by the Department.

The following practical measures for the deployment of good ventilation practices in schools should be considered by schools in the implementation of their COVID-19 Response Plans,

1. The opening of windows to introduce fresh air is very important and should continue to be used during school opening times via a proactive rather than reactive approach.
2. Achieving fresh air via a number of windows partially opened as required rather than one window fully open can help to maximise the use of window driven natural ventilation distribution across the room without causing discomfort.
3. In colder weather any local chilling effect can be offset by opening the windows nearest and above the radiators.
4. Consideration should be given to local circumstances that may require to have additional windows open such as after break time activities.
5. Rooms with adequate fresh air should not be stuffy or have condensation on the window glass.
6. Schools should also ensure that all permanent ventilation openings in rooms are fully open and not blocked by wall hangings etc. These normally are either a circular or rectangle ventilation grill on the external classroom wall or linear slot type ventilators built into the window frames. All of these should be opened all the time, if they have been taped and sealed for decorating purposes then the tape/sealing should be removed.
7. All mechanical ventilation systems and any air conditioning systems should be set to 100% fresh air, any air conditioning units that cannot operate on 100% fresh air should be left off. Check with unit suppliers if in doubt.

Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19

While a member of the school community should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of COVID-19, the following steps outline how the school will respond to a suspected case that may arise during the course of the day.

Staff/Students are asked to notify a member of staff from the following list,

- Betty Cahill
- Jean Ryan
- Donncha Ó Siadhail
- Patricia Darby
- Aoife Daly
- Mark Whittington
- Connie Fitssimons
- Ciara Moran (office)

Staff are advised to set up a whats app group that will inform all of the above if a student is ill. A member of the team will collect the student/ teacher from their current location and escort them to the covid isolation room.

Room 11, (room at bottom of the stairs) has been identified as a designated isolation area should any member of the school community feel unwell. The area will be well ventilated and the following will be provided;

- Tissues, hand sanitiser, disinfectant and/or wipes,
- PPE., gloves, masks,
- Clinical waste bags.

If a member of the school community displays symptoms of COVID-19 during work, the response team

will:

- isolate the individual and have a procedure in place to accompany the individual to the designated isolation area via the isolation route, keeping at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic person at all times.
- provide a mask (if necessary) for the person presenting with symptoms if one is available. The individual should wear the mask at all times and when exiting the premises.
- assess whether the unwell individual can immediately be directed to go home and call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home.
- facilitate the person presenting with symptoms remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and facilitate them calling their doctor. The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. Advice should be given to the person presenting with symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bag provided.
- arrange transport home or to hospital for medical assessment. Public transport of any kind should not be used.
- 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.
- provide advice and assistance if contacted by the HSE.

When contacted by the HSE, the COVID-19 response team should use the records kept regarding Direct Contact to identify people who have been in contact with the individual. The HSE may advise on any actions or precautions that should be taken.

Cleaning and Disinfection

Cleaning of all work areas will be conducted at regular intervals using disinfectants to kill germs and stop the spread of disease and in a visible manner to instil staff and visitor confidence. Regular meetings will be held with the LWRs and all auxiliary staff to ensure that all areas are meeting required standards and to address any emerging concerns.

All staff will be supplied with cleaning equipment for their individual work spaces. (wipes for computers keys / touched surfaces etc..) Students will clean down their desk and chair on entering and leaving the classroom.

School Community

All members of the school community are asked to be mindful of the role they play in maintaining a safe and healthy teaching and learning environment.

All members of the school community should follow the public health advice and guidance, as well as any specific direction from the Board of Management and Senior Management. They should also adopt good hygiene practices, such as frequent hand washing, respiratory etiquette and physical distancing to protect themselves and their work colleagues against infection and should seek professional healthcare advice if unwell.

If a member of the school community has any symptoms of COVID-19, they should not attend work. People should also avoid making contact with their face and in particular their eyes, nose and mouth. As noted above, the key to effective implementation of the infection prevention and control measures as well as occupational health and safety measures in the school is having a strong communication and shared collaborative approach between all.

All members of the school community will:

- make themselves aware of the signs and 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 signs or symptoms.
- report to senior management immediately if any symptoms develop during the course of the day.

FIRST AID

In the event that first aid is required in the school it may not be possible to maintain a distance of 2 metres. Staff with a specific role in acting as first responders should be provided with updated training on infection prevention and control principles including performance of hand hygiene and appropriate use of personal protective equipment when delivering first aid.

Further advice on first aid is available from the Pre Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC):

https://www.phecit.ie/PHECC/Publications_and_Resources/Newsletters/Newsletter_Items/2020/PHECC_COVID_19_Advisory_v1.aspx

Risk Assessment

A Risk assessment audit has been undertaken to identify areas of concern for all members of the school community. These risks as well as the procedures in place to mitigate risks will be explained to all members of our school community when they return to school.

Use of PPE – Personal Protective Equipment

While correctly using PPE can help prevent some exposures, it should not take the place of other preventative measures as outlined.

Masks/Face Coverings

Cloth face coverings act as a barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from travelling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the face covering coughs, sneezes, talks or raises their voice. Cloth face coverings are therefore intended to prevent transmission of the virus from the wearer (who may not know that they are infected) to those with whom they come into close contact.

It is therefore **a requirement** that teachers, staff and students attending post primary schools wear a face covering when a physical distance of 2m from other staff or students cannot be maintained.

In certain situations the use of clear visors should be considered, for example staff interacting with students with hearing difficulties or learning difficulties.

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

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

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

All staff and students wearing face coverings should be reminded to not touch the face covering and to wash or sanitise their hands (using hand sanitiser) before putting on and after taking off the face covering.

COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of post primary schools Information should be provided on the proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/aac74c-guidance-on-safe-use-of-face-coverings/>

All teachers and staff should be aware that they should wash or sanitize hands (using a hand sanitizer) before and after helping a student put on or adjust a face covering.

Cloth face coverings should be washed after every day of use and/or before being used again, or if visibly soiled.

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

The 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 may wish to utilize their own face covering on a day-to-day basis, schools should have available a stock of additional disposable or multi-use face coverings, or if appropriate face visors, available for staff in case a back-up face covering is needed throughout the day or where required on an ongoing basis.

On the use of face masks by staff, schools should consider the specific circumstances where the use of medical face masks, to EU Standard EN 14683, may be more appropriate for staff (for example where staff by necessity need to be in close and continued proximity with students with intimate care needs such as SNAs or School Bus Escorts).

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

- Full hygiene compliance as set out above should be applied and maintained in all Circumstances.

Further PPE

- PPE must be selected based on the hazard to the worker.
- Employers must provide PPE and protective clothing to workers in accordance with identified COVID-19 exposure risks and in line with Public Health Advice.
- Workers should be trained in the proper use, cleaning, storing and disposal of PPE.
- Gloves are generally not required for infection prevention and control purposes. Where gloves are necessary, they must not be considered a substitute for hand hygiene and hands must be cleaned whenever gloves are removed.

Further advice in relation to PPE will be based on Health and Safety measures deemed appropriate at the time.

Restructuring the workplace

The following has been implemented;

- revision of staffing arrangements and timetabling
- implement a staggered lunch/ break
- Introduction of a one way system around the school
- minimise the sharing of equipment and/or tools
- minimising visitors to the school
- identify and suspend all non-essential activities which do not directly impact school functionality

Working from Home

In the event of a school closure depts will have plans in place for online learning. Further guidelines will be issued when appropriate. Staff are asked to be mindful of their own wellbeing when working from home. Staff are reminded of their responsibilities in relation to GDPR and privacy issues when providing remote learning.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

On returning to work we are mindful that members of the school community may be suffering from anxiety or stress. Many may have gone through traumatic events such as the serious illness or death of a relative or friend, or be experiencing financial difficulties or problems with their personal relationships.

Others returning to the school after a period of isolation are likely to have concerns about the risk of infection or changes to their job due to the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. All normal school supports are available to all members of the school community. We will also provide information on publicly available sources of support and advice and information about the prevention and control measures taken in the workplace to reduce the risk of infection.

A range of supports and advice is also available from the Health and Safety Authority on work related stress at:

https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Topics/Workplace_Stress/. The Authority also provides a free online risk assessment tool for addressing work related stress: WorkPositive (www.workpositive.ie).

• The Government's "In This Together Campaign" also provides information on minding one's mental health as well as tips on staying active and connected and may be useful for use by employers and workers:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/together/?referrer=/together/>

Employee Assistance Programmes or Occupational Health service.

School Staff are reminded that they have access to support through the Employee assistance programme in conjunction with Inspire workplaces.

The service is accessible through the **Freephone Helpline** at **1800 411 057** and is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS UNDER OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY LEGISLATION IF A WORKER CONTRACTS COVID - 19

There is no requirement for an employer to notify the Health and Safety Authority if a worker contracts COVID-19.

Diseases are not reportable under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Reporting of Accidents and Dangerous Occurrences) Regulations 2016 (S.I. No. 370 of 2016). COVID-19 is however reportable under the Infectious Diseases (Amendment) Regulations 2020 by a medical practitioner who becomes aware of or suspects an instance of such disease. Such a report should be sent to the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) in the HSE: <https://www.hpsc.ie/notifiablediseases/>.

This document is a living document and will be updated and amended regularly based on up to date health advice.