

Introduction:

The Minister for Education has published the Roadmap for the Full Return to School. It sets out what the operation of schools will look like and the range of supports which will be available in a COVID-19 context. It has been developed in line with public health advice issued by the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) and in compliance with the Return to Work Safely Protocol developed by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and the Department of Health with guidance documents provided by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA). Each workplace is required to have a COVID-19 Response Plan. In addition to being places of learning, schools are also places of work. This document sets out the information that post primary schools need to implement a School COVID-19 Response Plan, including a:

- COVID-19 Policy Statement
- Lead Worker Representative (LWR)
- process to deal with a suspected case of COVID-19

The purpose of this document is to provide clear and helpful guidance for the safe operation of post primary schools 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 which can be taken in post primary schools 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. Details of that advice can be found here.

One of the key challenges is to balance the need for a practical and sensible level of caution with the need to provide a supportive environment for teaching and learning. This document identifies the steps schools can 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 has worked intensively with the education partners to develop consistent plans, advice, protocols and guidance for schools, including the School COVID-19 Response plan. There is a suite of documentation available to support schools to reopen safely and fully including guidance on learning, school programmes and wellbeing for the 2020/21 school year. There is also information on funding, staffing and resources to schools to support COVID-19 measures. Schools are advised to familiarise themselves with these documents. All of the documents will be available at gov.ie/backtoschool.

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

Purpose of a Response Plan:

The Columba College COVID-19 Response Plan is designed to support the staff and Education Training Board (ETB) in putting measures in place that aim to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the school environment. This COVID-19 Response Plan details the policies and practices necessary for a school to meet the government's <u>Return to Work Safely Protocol</u>. The Department of Education plan for a 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 Columba College complies with the public health advice and guidance documents prepared by the department. Doing so minimises the risk to students, staff and others.

This response plan supports the sustainable reopening of Columba College 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 Columba College requires strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between the ETB, staff, students and parents. The assistance and cooperation of all staff, students, parents, contractors and visitors is critical to the success of the plan.

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 Board of Management (BOM)/Education and Training Board (ETB) and brought to the attention of the staff, students, parents and others. Schools must have a COVID-19 policy in place prior to the reopening of schools for the 2020/21 school year. A copy of the Columba College COVID-19 Policy can be found in Appendix A.

The ETB 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.

Planning and preparing for return to school: COVID-19 response plan for safe reopening of post primary schools:

Details for the safe reopening of Columba College and the applicable controls are outlined below. Columba College has plans and procedures in place to ensure 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. In Columba College, the principal and the LWR's review the Department of Education and government websites on a regular basis for updates.
- means of passing on this information in a timely manner to staff, students, parents and others as required. In Columba College, the principal will contact staff; students and parents as required.
- resured that staff have reviewed the training documents. In Columba College, a log is kept of all documentation completed by all staff. The Principal, supported by the Deputy Principal, oversees this.

- > provided staff with access to the **Back to Work form.** LWETB have provided and online platform for staff to access the form which the Principal must review and approve.
- identified a Lead Worker Representative. In Columba College, Mr. Jonathan Conroy has been appointed as the LWR.
- displayed posters and signs to prevent introduction and spread of COVID-19. Columba College have displayed the relevant posters and will continue to update these as required.
- made the necessary changes to support the redesign of classrooms to support physical distancing. In Columba College, students have been assigned a Base Classroom. These rooms have been redesigned to facilitate the required distancing for social distancing.
- 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.
- The school has compiled a specific COVID19 risk assessment. The Columba College COVID-19 Risk Assessment can be found at Appendix C.
- made necessary arrangements to restrict access to the school and maintain records of contacts to the school. All visitors to Columba College must request an appointment which must be approved by the school principal. School visits will be only permitted where no alternative is possible.
- reviewed the school buildings and completed the following maintenance tasks:
 - o Flushed the water system to prevent Legionnaires disease.
 - o Checked all school equipment for signs of deterioration.
 - o Serviced all mechanical ventilation units in the school.

There DES have provided checklists here to help schools with these issues and the school has followed these. These can also be found in the appendices of this document.

Induction Training:

All Columba College 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 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 or her duties, he or she should immediately seek guidance from the Principal who is supported in this role by the Board of Management/ETB. Details of the training can be found here.

Columba College will provide parents and students with information to raise COVID-19 awareness to help minimise the risk of introduction and spread of the virus in Columba College. Furthermore, all students will also undertake COVID-19 Induction Training prior to recommencing classes in school.

Procedure for returning to work (RTW):

In order to return to the workplace, staff must complete the return to work form online which can be accessed through the school SharePoint. The link has been emailed to all staff. The principal has notified all staff of this. PME/student teachers/additional staff will be assigned a Microsoft Office 365 account where they can access the form prior to commencing within the school. A RTW form should be completed and returned online **3 days** before returning to work.

On receipt of the completed form the Principal will review the form and ascertain if any follow-up information is required from the staff member. The Principal will provide all staff off details of the Induction Training, and other relevant training, that staff must complete prior to the return to the workplace. All staff will be informed of additional health and safety measures that are put in place.

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 includes people who:

- are over 70 years of age even if fit and well
- > have had an organ transplant
- re undergoing active chemotherapy for cancer
- radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
- have cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment
- real 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)
- retaking 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, is included in the following circular letters:

- 1. Coronavirus (COVID-19): Arrangements for certain employees of recognised Primary and Post Primary schools in the Free Education Scheme and of ETBs, employed using grant funding 0054/2020
- 2. Coronavirus (COVID-19): Arrangements for staff other than Teachers and SNAs who are employed by ETBs 0050/2020
- 3. Coronavirus (COVID-19): Arrangements for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants employed in recognised Primary and Post Primary schools 0049/2020

Lead Worker Representative:

In Columba College, one LWR have been appointed – Mr. Jonathan Conroy. 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 ETB 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 Lead Worker Representative, Mr. Jonathan Conroy, who will engage with school management.

In summary, the role of the Lead Worker Representative 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.

All Columba College 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 are set out here. This can also be found in Appendix B.

Display 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 and so on. Schools can then arrange to display the posters in prominent areas such as offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilets. These signs are available here. Columba College has put these posters up at visible locations around the school.

Making changes to school layout:

Maintaining physical distancing in the school environment is recommended as one of the key control measures to minimise the risk of the introduction and spread of COVID-19. Further information on how physical distancing can be used in the school environment is available here. This can also be found in Appendix I.

Schools are required to reconfigure classrooms and other areas to support physical distancing in line with the guidance in advance of school reopening. To ensure that students and staff can maintain physical distancing; the following measures have been taken in Columba College:

- All rooms have been redesigned to allow for maximum capacity whilst adhering to the 1 meter social distancing requirements where possible.
- Classrooms have become student based where students will remain in their base class where possible. Students will have to move for specialist subjects and for subjects that require Higher/Ordinary/Foundation levels.
- A one-way system has been implemented in the main assembly hall and outside of the school. but these will be clearly identified during staff and student induction.
- Two entry and exit points have been identified, with staggered exit times at the end of the school day.
- Break and lunch times have been staggered to limit the demand on school space and facilities.
- To allow for greater capacity during lunchtimes, a temporary roof will be erected along with extra seating.
- Additional accommodation has been granted by the department of education and will be in place by the end of September

Health and Safety Risk Assessment:

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment. A template risk assessment to identify the control measures required to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 in school settings is available here. This is also available in Appendix C. 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 school's 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. There are two certified first responders on the school staff (Mr. Dermot Brady and Ms. Caroline Mee)

Access to the school and contact tracing 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 centers 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. In Columba College, access is strictly by appointment only. Access will only be granted if a meeting cannot occur using digital technology or by telephone.

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. A sample contact tracing log is available here. In Columba College a sign-in/sign-out system is in operation for any visit to Reception. An additional contact tracing form must be completed by each visitor who enters the main school building (past Reception area) for any period of time. These will be retained by the school.

The Data Protection Commission has provided guidance on the data protection implications of the return to work protocols. This advice can be found here. Schools are reminded that all school records and data must 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.

This document will be reviewed weekly during the LWR and Management meetings and in line with guidance from the HSE and the Department of Education and Science.

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 COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of post primary school 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 additional 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



Appendices

Appendix A – Covid-19 Policy Statement

Appendix B - Lead Worker Representative – Post-Primary Schools

Appendix C - Risk Assessment

Appendix D – Contact Tracing Log for School visitors

Appendix E – Checklist for School Management

Appendix F – Checklist for dealing with a suspected case of COVID-19

Appendix G – Checklist Lead Worker Representative

Appendix H – Checklist for Cleaning

Appendix I – 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



<u>Appendix A</u> Columba College COVID -19 Policy Statement

Columba College is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our staff and a safe learning environment for all our students. To ensure that, we have developed the following COVID-19 Response Plan. The ETB and all school staff are responsible for the implementation of this plan and a combined effort will help contain the spread of the virus. We will:

- continue to monitor our COVID-19 response and amend this plan in consultation with our staff
- provide up to date information to our staff and students on the Public Health advice issued by the HSE and Gov.ie
- display information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and correct handwashing techniques
- agree with staff, a worker representative who is easily identifiable to carry out the role outlined in this plan in relation to summer provision
- inform all staff and students of essential hygiene and respiratory etiquette and physical distancing requirements
- adapt the school to facilitate physical distancing as appropriate in line with the public health guidance and direction of the Department of Education
- keep a contact log to help with contact tracing
- ensure staff and students engage with the induction / familiarisation briefing provided by the Department of Education
- implement the agreed procedures to be followed in the event of someone showing symptoms of COVID-19 while at school
- provide instructions for staff and students to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during school time
- implement cleaning in line with Department of Education advice
- Facemasks: In line with the updated guidance issued by the DES on Friday 7th August

 Facemasks are recommended when a social distance of 2 meters cannot be
 observed. Students are required to provide and wear their own masks to ensure the
 health and safety of all stakeholders. Class sizes are being reduced to ensure a
 minimum of 1-meter social distancing. Therefore, we at Columba College are making
 Facemasks mandatory. The guiding principal in our decision making has been to
 ensure the health and safety of all students and staff.
- All relevant school policies including the Code of Behaviour will be reviewed and amended to include Covid-19 guidelines.

All school staff will be consulted on an ongoing basis and feedback is encouraged on any
concerns, issues or suggestions. This can be done through the Lead Worker
Representative(s), who will be supported in line with the agreement between the
Department and education partners.

Signed:	Date:
·	

Appendix B Lead Worker Representative – Post-Primary Schools:

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

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

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

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

1. Collaborative Approach:

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

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

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

2. Role of the Lead Worker Representative:

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

- Represent all staff in the workplace regardless of role, and be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of different staff cohorts;
- ➤ Keep up to date with the latest COVID-19 public health advice;
- ➤ Work collaboratively with school management to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19;
- Consult with school management on the control measures required to minimise the risk of staff and students being exposed to COVID-19;

- ➤ Promote good hygiene practices, in conjunction with school management, such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette along with maintaining social distancing in accordance with public health advice;
- Assist school management with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace in line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol and current public health advice;
- Monitor, in conjunction with school management, adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19;
- Conduct reviews of safety measures that are in place to address and suppress Covid-19 in the workplace. Reviews (including an examination of the workplace) should be conducted on a regular basis (at least twice per week);
- Report any issues of concern immediately to school management and keep records of such issues and actions taken to rectify them;
- Consult with the school management on the school's COVID-19 Response Plan in the event of someone developing COVID-19 while in school including the location of an isolation area and a safe route to that area;
- Following any incident, assess with the school management any follow up action that is required;
- Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.
- Make representations to school management on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.

3. What can a Lead Worker Representative Do?

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

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

4. Does a LWR have any legal responsibilities?

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

5. Lead Worker Representative(s)

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

6. Selection of Lead Worker Representative(s)

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

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

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

7. Supports for the Lead Worker Representative/s

The LWR(s) shall be entitled to:

- ➤ Be provided with information and training in respect of their role. LWETB LWR Training was completed on Tuesday August 25th and Wednesday 26th
- ➤ Be consulted by school management on the control measures being put in place by the school to minimise the risk of being exposed to COVID-19;
- Regular communication with school management on issues related to COVID-19;
- ➤ Be informed of changes in practice arising from COVID-19 response measures;
- ➤ Have access to any risk assessments prepared or carried out in relation to COVID-19 and to details of incidents of suspected COVID-19 cases that have been notified to the HSE, where they occurred, and any actions taken.
- Be provided with the necessary facilities to enable them to consult with employees or prepare any submissions or reports. These might include access to a meeting room, photocopier, communications and equipment.

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

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

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

8. Procedure for dealing with issues that arise

Where a COVID-19 control concern is identified by the LWR (or is notified to the LWR by a staff member), the LWR should bring this to the attention of the Principal. Action points for addressing the issue should where possible be agreed between the LWR and the Principal as a

matter of urgency. Staff should be informed of the outcome. It is envisaged that issues will be resolved at school level to the maximum extent possible.

If agreement cannot be reached, the LWR should notify the Board of Management (Chairperson in the first instance)/Education and Training Board head office of the issue. Action points for addressing the issue should where possible be agreed between the LWR and the BoM/ETB head office as a matter of urgency. Staff should be informed of the outcome. If, having exhausted the process above, a serious issue of concern remains outstanding, the LWR may have recourse to the **Health and Safety Authority**



Appendix C Risk Assessment

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

Hazards	Is the hazard	What is the risk?	mn	Controls	ls this control	Action/to do list/outstanding controls	Person responsible	Signature and date
	Prosent?		M=Medium L=Low	(When all controls are in place risk will be reduced)	in place?	"Risk rating applies to outstanding controls outlined in this column		when action completed
Covid-19	z	Illness	ェ	School Covid19 Response Plan in place	V _Q ×	Examples of Actions	Name of	
	8			in line with Department of Education guidance and the Return to Work Safely Protocol and public health advice		Follow public health guidance from HSE re hygiene and respiratory etiquette	staff member	
					T	Complete School COVID-19 Policy Statement		
						Return to Work Forms received and reviewed		
					ř	Undertake Induction Training		
					Ť	Maintain log of staff, student and visitors		
						Complete checklists as required: School Management How to deal with a suspected case Physical distancing requirements Other school specific checklist		
	If there is o action shou actions shou	If there is one or more High Risk (H) actions needed action should be taken. Medium Risk (M) actions shactions should be dealt with as soon as practicable.	Risk (H) action ium Risk (M) a as soon as pra	If there is one or more High Risk (H) actions needed, then the risk of injury could be high and immediate action should be taken. Medium Risk (M) actions should be dealt with as soon as possible. Low Risk (L) actions should be dealt with as soon as possible.	mmediate ow Risk (L)			

Risk Assessment carried out by:

Appendix D
Contact Tracing Log for School visitors



Appendix E

Checklist for School Management

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

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

Planning and Systems:

Item	Description	Answer	Action Needed
1	Is there a system in place to keep up to date with the latest advice from Government and DES, to ensure that advice is made available in a timely manner to staff and students and to adjust your plans and procedures in line with that advice?	Yes	
2	Have you appointed staff member/s to the Lead Worker Representative (LWR) position in accordance with the agreed protocol?	Yes	The state of
3	Have you advised staff as to who has been appointed to the position of LWR?	Yes	
4	Have you prepared a school COVID-19 Response Plan and made it available to staff and students?	Yes	M
5	Have you a system in place to provide staff and students with information and guidance on the measures that have been put in place to help prevent the spread of the virus and what is expected of them?	Yes	Plan will be shared & Induction Training will be completed by staff and students.
6	Have you displayed the COVID-19 posters in suitable locations highlighting the signs and symptoms of COVID-19?	Yes	/ /
7	Have you told staff and students of the purpose of the COVID-19 contact log?	Yes	1 10
8	Have you a COVID-19 contact log in place to support HSE tracing efforts if required?	Yes	100
9	Have you informed staff on the measures that have been put in place to help prevent the spread of the virus and what is expected of them, and provided a system for them to raise issues or concerns and to have them responded to?	Yes	
10	Have you reviewed and updated risk assessments in line with Department advice to take account of any controls to help prevent the spread of COVID-19?	Yes	
11	Have you updated emergency plans, in particular to take account of the COVID-19 response plan?	Yes	A CONTRACTOR

Staff

Item	Description	Answer	Action Needed
12	Have you made available to each staff member a		
	COVID-19 return-to-work form to be completed and	Mary	
	returned 3 days before they return to the workplace?	Yes	
13	Are you aware of staff members who are at very high	100	Aware of staff who
	risk under the HSE guidance on people most at risk and	700	have informed me
	advised them of the Department of Education's agreed		per Circular
	arrangements for management of those staff?	Yes	49/2020.
14	Have you advised staff and students they must stay at		SSE STATE OF THE PARTY OF THE P
1.0	home if sick or if they have any symptoms of		The second second
. 42	COVID19?	Yes	7000
15	Have you told staff and students what to do and what		
4000	to expect if they start to develop symptoms of		1000
8	COVID19 while in school, including where the	90	Will be completed
	isolation area is?	No	on the 31st of August
16	Have you advised staff of the availability of the		2 hour wellbeing
200	supports of the occupational health and wellbeing		seminar took place
THE REAL PROPERTY.	programme through Spectrum Life?	No	on 2 nd Sept

Training and Induction:

Item	Description	Answer	Action Needed
17	Have you advised staff and students to view the Department of Education's training materials which are available online?	Yes	All staff and students completed training in school
18	Have you taken the necessary steps to update your school induction / familiarisation training to include all information relating to COVID-19?	Yes	All staff and students completed in house training
19	Have first aiders, if available, been given updated training on infection prevention and control re: hand hygiene and use of PPE as appropriate? (It is intended that training will be provided as part of the DES online training programme).	No	First aiders on staff: Dermot Brady Caroline Mee Training to be made available by LWETB

Buildings / Equipment:

Dunaing	7 Equipment.		
Item	Description	Answer	Action Needed
20	CONTRACTOR OF THE PARTY AND ADDRESS OF THE PAR		Will be completed
T	If you have mechanical ventilation does it need cleaning or maintenance before the school reopens?	Yes	<mark>on:</mark>
21	Does your water system need flushing at outlets following low usage to prevent Legionnaire's Disease?	Yes	Completed 26/08/2020
22	Have you visually checked, or had an appropriate person check, all equipment in the school for signs of	Sec.	Completed by Principal, LWR and
	deterioration or damage before being used again?	Yes	Caretaker

23	Have you arranged for the school including all equipment, desks, benches, doors and frequently		Completed 26/08/2020 anti-Microbial coating put
	touched surfaces points, been thoroughly cleaned before		on door handles and
	reopening?	Yes	switches

Control Measures in place Hand / respiratory hygiene:

Item	Description	Answer	Action Needed
24	Have you accessed supplies of hand sanitizers and any necessary PPE equipment in line with the HPSC health guidance relating to the reopening of schools, from the national framework provided by the Department?	Yes	More pending
25	Are there hand washing/hand sanitising stations in place to accommodate staff, students and visitors adhering to hand hygiene measures in accordance with Department guidance?	No	Hand sanitizing dispensers placed on all doors to classrooms Hand sanitising stations are at all entry and exit points
26	Have arrangements been made for staff and students to have regular access to hand- washing/hand sanitising facilities as appropriate?	Yes	Extra hot water facilities installed outside.
27	Are hand sanitisers easily available and accessible for all staff, students and visitors – e.g. in each classroom and at entry and exit points to school buildings?	Yes	1.18
28	Have you made arrangements to ensure hand hygiene facilities are regularly checked and well-stocked?	Yes	1 19
29	Does the alcohol-based hand sanitiser have at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol as the active ingredient?	Yes	1 18
30	Have you informed staff and students about the importance of hand washing?	Yes	1
31	Have you arranged for staff and students to view how to wash their hands (with soap and water for at least 20 seconds) and dry them correctly through the use of the HSE video resource?	Yes	Video was shown to all staff and students posters are in all toilets facilities
32	Have you shown staff and students how to use hand sanitiser correctly and where hand-sanitising stations are located?	Yes	
33	Have you displayed posters on how to wash hands correctly in appropriate locations?	Yes	
34	Have you told staff and students when they need to wash their hands or use hand sanitiser? This includes: before and after eating and preparing food after coughing or sneezing after using the toilet where hands are dirty before and after wearing gloves before and after being on public transport	20.3	
	 □ before leaving home □ when arriving/leaving the school/other sites 	Yes	

	☐ after each class		
	☐ after touching potentially contaminated surfaces		
	☐ if in contact with someone displaying any COVID-		
	19 symptoms		
35	Have you told staff and students of the importance of		
	good respiratory measures to limit the spread of the	No.	
	virus, including?	0000	
	□ avoid touching the face, eyes, nose and mouth	200	
	cover coughs and sneezes with an elbow or a tissue	1880	
	☐ dispose of tissues in a covered bin	Yes	

Physical Distancing:

Item	Description	Answer	Action Needed
36	Have you identified all available school space to be used to maximise physical distancing?	Yes	- 10
37	Have you reviewed the templates provided by the Department of Education which show options for revised layout of school rooms to meet physical distancing requirements?	Yes	
38	Have you arranged to revise the layout of the rooms and furniture as per the Department guidelines?	Yes	1000
39	Have you arranged in each room that the teacher's desk should be at least 1 metre (and where possible 2 metres) away from student desks?	Yes	V VIII
40	Have you arranged in each room that students would be, at least 1 metre and (where possible 2 metres) away from each other?	Yes	Rooms spaced for 1m distancing.
41	Have you where possible and practicable assigned students to main class cohorts to minimise the risk of infection from COVID-19?	Yes	/ 15
42	Have you arranged the timetable to facilitate double classes where possible and practicable?	Yes	M
43	Have you advised staff and students that when students are moving to an elective subject they would, where practicable be seated with members of their main class cohort?	Yes	
44	Have you made arrangements to limit interaction on arrival and departure from school and in other shared areas?	Yes	
45	Have you encouraged walking or cycling to school as much as possible?	Yes	
46	Have you made arrangements, in so far as possible, to open additional access points to school to reduce congestion?	Yes	Charles and the
47	Can you provide a oneway system for entering and exiting the school, where practical?	Yes	
48	Have you arranged for staff meetings to be held remotely or in small groups or in large spaces to facilitate physical distancing?	Yes	

49	Have you taken steps to minimise rotation of staff between classes where possible?	Yes
50	Have you a system to regularly remind staff and students to maintain physical distancing?	Yes
51	Have you advised staff and students not to shake hands and to avoid any physical contact?	Yes
52	Have you stopped all non-essential travel for school activities?	Yes

Visitors to Schools:

Item	Description	Answer	Action Needed
53	Have you identified the activities that involve interacting with essential visitors to schools, made arrangements to minimise the number of such visitors and put in place measures to prevent physical contact, as far as possible?	Yes	
54	Are there arrangements in place to inform essential visitors to schools of the measures to help prevent the spread of infection?	Yes	100
55	Have you a system in place for all visitors who do need to come to the school to make appointment arrange to contact a central point and to record their visit using the contact tracing log?	Yes	1 1

Appendix F:

Checklist for dealing with a suspected case of COVID-19:

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

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

Staff or students should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of COVID-19. The following summary, along with the accompany checklist, 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 should be considered and a contingency plan for dealing with additional cases put in place. The designated isolation area should 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: COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of post primary school.
- If the person with the suspected case is a student, the parents/guardians should be contacted immediately.
- ➤ Isolate the person 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;
- The isolation area does not have to be a room but if it is not a room it should be 2m away from others in the room;
- If it is not possible to maintain a distance of 2m a staff member caring for a student should wear a face covering or mask. Gloves should not be used as the virus does not pass through skin;
- ➤ Provide a mask for the person presenting with symptoms if one is available. He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises;
- Assess whether the individual who is displaying symptoms can immediately be directed to go home/be brought home by parents and call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home;
- Facilitate the person presenting with symptoms remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and facilitate them calling their doctor. The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. Advice should be given to the person presenting with symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bag provided;
- 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 is essential at all times.

Isolation Area:

Item	Description	Answer	Action Needed
1	Have you identified a place that can be used as an isolation area, preferably with a door that can close?	Yes	Room constructed in the basement.
2	Is the isolation area accessible, including to staff and students with disabilities?	Yes	
3	Is the route to the isolation area accessible?	Yes	
4	Have you a contingency plan for dealing with more than one suspected case of COVID-19?	Yes	Unused office
5	Are the following items available in the isolation area(s) Tissues Hand sanitiser Disinfectant/wipes Gloves/Masks Waste Bags Bins	Yes	

Please note: The isolation area does not have to be a separate room but if it is not a room it should be 2 metres away from others in the room

Isolating a Person:

Item	Description	Answer	Action Needed
6	Are procedures in place to accompany the infected person to the isolation area, along the isolation route		
	with physical distancing from them	Yes	
7	Are staff familiar with this procedure?	Yes	
8	Have others been advised to maintain a distance of at least 2m from the affected person at all times	Yes	The same of the sa
9	Have you a contingency plan for dealing with more than one suspected case of COVID-19?	(Barrier	-2000
10	Is there a disposable mask to wear for the affected person while in the common area and when exiting the building?	Yes	Students need their own mandatory face covering

Arranging for the affected person to leave the School:
The following checklist will be followed when arranging for an affected person to leave the school.

Item	Description	Please tick when completed
11	Staff – have you established by asking them if the staff members feel well enough to travel home?	Trease tiek when completed
12	Student – have you immediately contacted their parents/guardians and arranged for them to collect their student? Under no circumstances can a student use public or school transport to travel home if they are a suspected case of COVID-19.	
13	The affected person should be advised to avoid touching other people, surfaces and objects.	
14	The affected person should be advised to cover their mouth and nose with disposable tissue(s) when they cough or sneeze, and to put the tissue in the bin.	
15	Has transport home or to an assessment centre been arranged if the affected person has been directed to go there by their GP?	
16	Has the affected person been advised not to go to their GP's surgery or any pharmacy or hospital?	
17	Has the affected person been advised they must not use public transport?	1 / 18
18	Has the affected person been advised to continue wearing the face mask until they reach home?	

Follow up:

Item	Description	Please tick when completed
19	Have you carried out an assessment of the incident to identify any follow-up actions needed?	
20	The second secon	
1	Have you advised the LWR of the incident in accordance with the agreed protocol?	\$100 page 19
21	7000	
	Are you available to provide advice and assistance if contacted by the HSE?	

Cleaning:

Item	Description	Please tick when completed
22	Have you taken the isolation area out-of-use until cleaned and disinfected?	ia.
23	Have you made arrangements to clean and disinfect any classroom space where the staff or students were located?	
24	Have you arranged for cleaning and disinfection of the isolation area and any other areas involved, as soon as practical after the affected person has left the building?	
25	Have the cleaners been trained in dealing with contaminated areas and supplied with the appropriate PPE?	

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

- In Columba College; the rooms will be cleaned as soon as practicable possible.
- Once the room is vacated the room will not be reused until it has been 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 use household gloves and use a plastic apron if available.
- 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 utilised.



Appendix G:

Checklist Lead Worker Representative:

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

- 1. Have you been s/elected by your colleagues on the staff and have you agreed with your school principal to act as a Lead Worker Representative for your school, in accordance with the process for lead worker representative/s in schools that has been agreed centrally and is to be implemented locally).
- **2.** Have you been provided with information and training in relation to the role of Lead Worker Representative? (*Training for this role is currently being explored with the HSA*).
- 3. Are you keeping up to date with the latest COVID-19 advice from Government?
- **4.** Are you aware of the signs and symptoms of COVID-19?
- **5.** Do you know how the virus is spread?
- **6.** Do you know how to help prevent the spread of COVID-19?
- 7. Have you watched and do you understand the online training provided by the Department of Education and have you been given induction training before returning to school?
- **8.** Have you been made aware of the control measures your school has put in place to minimise the risk of you and others being exposed to COVID-19?
- 9. Are you helping in keeping your fellow workers up to date with the latest COVID-19 advice from Government?
- **10.** Have you completed the COVID-19 return-to-work form and given it to your school? (DES template Return-to-Work form available)
- 11. Are you aware of the control measures your school has put in place to minimise the risk of you and others being exposed to COVID-19? (*Checklist for School Management available*)
- 12. On behalf of the employer did your school principal consult with you when putting control measures in place? Control measures have been agreed centrally between the Department and education partners and will be revised as necessary. Consultation at school level should take place on any specific local arrangements necessary to implement the protocol
- **13.** Have you a means of regular communication with the principal and where applicable any other person with overall responsibility for the school COVID-19 plan?
- **14.** Are you co-operating with your school to make sure these control measures are maintained?
- **15.** Have you familiarised yourself with the cleaning requirements needed to help prevent cross contamination? (*Checklist for Cleaning and Disinfection available*)
- **16.** Have you been asked to walk around and check that the control measures are in place and are being maintained?
- 17. Are you reporting immediately to the person with overall responsibility for the school COVID-19 plan any problems, areas of non-compliance or defects that you see?
- **18.** Are you keeping a record of any problems, areas of non-compliance or defects and what action was taken to remedy the issue?
- **19.** Are you familiar with what to do in the event of someone developing the symptoms of COVID-19 while at school?
- **20.** Are you co-operating with your school in identifying an isolation area and a safe route to that area? (*Checklist for dealing with suspected case of COVID-19 available*)
- **21.** Are you helping in the monitoring and keeping under review the management of someone developing symptoms of COVID-19 while at school?
- **22.** Once the affected person has left the school, are you helping in assessing what follow-up action is needed?
- 23. Are you helping in maintaining the staff and student contact log?

- **24.** Have you been made aware of any changes to the emergency plans or first aid procedures for your school?
- **25.** Are you making yourself available to fellow staff to listen to any COVID-19 control concerns or suggestions they may have?
- **26.** Are you raising those control concerns or suggestions with your school Principal and feeding back the response to the staff member/s who raised the issue?
- 27. Are you aware of the availability of the Spectrum Life Wellbeing Together Programme?
- **28.** Have you been provided by the Principal/ school management with the supports to which you are entitled in your role as Lead Worker Representative?
- **29.** If you are a teacher, have you been provided with the 2 hours per week of protected time off class contact hours, as provided for in the protocol?
- **30.** If you are an SNA, have you been provided with 66 of the "72 hours", as provided for in the protocol?

If you are a school secretary or a caretaker have your duties been re-prioritised by school management to afford you sufficient time to carry out your duties as LWR within the scope of your normal contracted hours, as provide for in the protocol?



Appendix H:

Checklist for Cleaning

Item	Description	Answer	Action Needed
	Have you a system in place for checking and keeping up to date with the latest public health advice from Government and the Department of Education, to ensure that advice is made available in a timely manner to staff and students and to adjust your cleaning procedures in line with that advice?	-	
2	Have you reviewed the HPSC health advice for the safe re-opening of schools, in particular Section 5.6 Environmental Hygiene?	7	
3	Have you explained the need for the enhanced cleaning regime to staff and students?		1 320
4	Are you aware that cleaning is best achieved using a general purpose detergent ad warm water, clean cloths, mops and the mechanical action of wiping and cleaning, following by rinsing and drying?		1 1
5	Have you sufficient cleaning materials in place to support the enhanced cleaning regime?		- 33
6	Have you provided training for cleaning staff on the enhanced cleaning regime? (DES intends to provide online training for cleaning staff)		/ //
7	Have you made arrangements for the regular and safe emptying of bins?	100	1007
8	Are you familiar with the cleaning options for school settings set out in the HPSC health advice for schools for surfaces, toilets, cleaning equipment, PPE and waste management?	7	C.
9	Are you aware that each school setting should be cleaned once per day?		300
10	Have you in place a system for regular cleaning of the following frequently touched surfaces? Door handles, Hand rails Chairs/arm rests Communal eating areas Sinks Toilets facilities		
11	Have you provided cleaning materials to staff and students so that they can clean their own desk or immediate workspace?		

12	Have you advised staff that they are responsible for cleaning personal items that have been brought to work and are likely to be handled at work or during breaks? E.g. mobile phone laptop and to avoid leaving them down on communal surfaces or they will need to clean the surface after the personal item is removed.		
13	Have you advised staff and students to avoid sharing items such as cups, bottles, cutlery, pens		
14	Have you put in place a written cleaning schedule to be made available to cleaning staff including: Items and areas to be cleaned Frequency of cleaning Cleaning materials to be used Equipment to be used and method of operation		
15	Are you aware of the details of how to clean following a suspected case of COVID-19 is covered under Appendix F	100	4
16	If disinfection of contaminated surfaces is required, is a system in place to do this following cleaning?	1	100
17	If cleaning staff have been instructed to wear gloves when cleaning are they aware of the need to wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water, both before and after wearing gloves?		1 300
18	Have you a system in place for the disposal of cleaning cloths and used wipes in a rubbish bag? Current HSE guidance recommends waste such as cleaning waste, tissues etc. from a person suspected of having COVID-19 should be double bagged and stored in a secure area for 72 hours before being presented for general waste collection.		Waste needs to be double bagged and stored safely for 72 hours.
19	Have you ensured there is a system in place to make sure reusable cleaning equipment including mop heads and non-disposable cloths are cleaned before re-use?		/ //
20	Have you ensured there is a system in place to ensure that equipment such as buckets are emptied and cleaned with a fresh solution of disinfectant before re-use?	5	13



Appendix I:

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 interim public health advice provided by the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC), and the practical application of this advice within schools as reflected in the guidance developed by the Department of Education, is predicated on:

- Minimising risk of introduction of infection into the school through exclusion of pupils, staff members and visitors who are ill
- Managing risk of spread if introduced by the following
 - o Regular hand hygiene;
 - Maintaining physical distancing;
 - o Application of respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette; and
 - o Environmental hygiene.

The public health advice makes clear that:

".. the most critical part of managing the risks of COVID-19 related to schools is doing everything practical to avoid introduction of COVID-19 into the school. If the infection is not introduced it cannot spread".

In terms of maintaining physical distancing, measures fall into two broad categories:

- (i) Increasing separation;
- (ii) Decreasing interaction between students themselves, between students and staff and between staff when they are together;

The public health advice states that:

".. the principle of distancing can be usefully applied in the school setting, allowing for some flexibility when needed whilst noting that it must be applied in a practical way, recognising that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on this issue".

The public health advice sets out that physical distancing of at least 1 metre (or of 2 metres where possible) should be maintained between individual students and staff.

The public health advice also recognises that:

- the implementation of physical distancing will look different across the various ages and stages of learning;
- care should be taken to avoid generating tension or potential conflict and some flexibility in the implementation of measures may be required at times;
- > staff will not always be able to maintain physical distance from their students and it is not appropriate that they would be expected to do so where this could have a detrimental impact on the student or the learning and health and safety of other students. They should take measures to avoid close contact at face to face level such as remaining standing rather than sitting beside/crouching down.

In terms of reconfiguring schools in a way that enables the implementation of the public health advice within the classroom, it is acknowledged that each school setting is different in terms of (i) location; (ii) physical layout (iii) available space within the school; (iv) student numbers; (v) class configuration; ease of potential access to space outside the school.

In recognition that a 'one size fits all' approach would not be appropriate to impose across all schools, and that schools themselves are best placed to decide on the appropriate configuration for their school, the following framework of available measures is provided as a suite of measures that must be implemented at individual school level to the greatest possible extent:

1. Reconfigure class spaces to maximise physical distancing:

Remove any unnecessary cabinets, furniture etc. to maximise space in the classroom. Rooms should be allocated based on available space with larger classes based in the largest rooms. Consider whether a central storage area can be provided in the school for teacher resources which can help maximise the space available within the classroom.

Bespoke desk/storage solutions for teachers within classrooms can assist with physical distancing arrangements and should be provided where required.

Some older schools have a plinth around the teacher's desk. The plinth can occupy a substantial area and should be removed wherever possible.

Room layouts should not necessarily be confined to rows, but arrangements such as diagonals etc. should be considered to maximise the available learning space for the maximum number of students who will use that room.

Students should be based in the same classroom as much as possible.

Consideration should be given to seating arrangements in base class to minimise interaction between students from different base classes when they go to their elective classes.

2. Utilising and reconfiguring all available space in the school in order to maximise physical distancing:

Review utilisation of all rooms and areas within the school to maximise occupancy in the school. This may involve utilising all available largest spaces (such as Assembly area, PE Hall etc.) to accommodate larger classes.

3. Review Timetables:

Review timetables to ensure available space and teaching resources are maximised to the greatest extent possible (for example, taking account of staggered lunch-time and break periods if possible) to maximise the availability of these largest spaces over the course of the school day.

4. Reconfiguring Classes:

Maximise the use of staff resources including any additional resources provided by the Department in response to Covid-19, to achieve physical distance requirements for larger classes e.g. splitting larger classes etc.

While "team teaching" in the classroom is generally encouraged, it can impact on capacity of a school to achieve physical distancing arrangements. Schools should therefore consider

whether the needs of pupils can be met in alternative manner such as in separate smaller class groups – particularly for the 2020/21 school year.

5. Consider Use of Live Streaming within the School:

For those larger classes which remain difficult to accommodate consider a live streaming of that class to another room or area in the school. The small number of students which could not be accommodated in the main classroom, could watch live from a satellite room or area in the school under supervision by a teacher. Students could be rotated on an equitable basis to the satellite room/area.

6. Accessing available spaces within the local community:

Consider accessing available spaces in the local community if practicable.

The above suite of measures provides a practical framework for schools to use to maintain physical distancing in the classroom with the full return of all students for the 2020/21 school year.

In exceptional circumstances, where notwithstanding the application of the measures in the above framework, physical distancing by organisational means for a larger class proves not to be possible, then the school must consider the use of face covering/visors in that larger class. This exceptional measure should be kept continually under review by the school, who should continually make every effort to devise an alternative solution using the measures set out at 1 to 6 above.

The use of face coverings/visors must be implemented where the 1 metre distance cannot be achieved. For example:

- (a) more than 24 students in a 49sq classroom that has been fully cleared
- (b) more than 20 students in a 42sqm classroom.

Staff or students who cannot wear face coverings or visors for health reasons should be based in other classrooms or areas wherever possible. Students should not be required to wear face coverings or visors for the duration of the whole school day.

The following measures have been taken in Columba College:

- All rooms have been redesigned to allow for maximum capacity while adhering to the social distancing requirements where possible.
- Classrooms have become student based where students will remain in their base class where possible. Students will have to move for specialist subjects and for subjects that require Higher/Ordinary/Foundation levels.
- Assigned seating will take place in all classrooms.
- A one-way system has been implemented in the school.
- Two entry and exit points, have been identified, with staggered exit times at the end of the school day.
- To allow for greater capacity during lunchtimes, several extra benches have been purchased and a temporary roof will be erected.
- Additional storage space has been provided for teachers who do not have a base room as a result of providing students with base classes.
- ➤ The timetable has been reconfigured to change class periods to double periods where applicable. This will reduce movement during the school day.
- ➤ Lunch breaks have been staggered.

- In some cases, where team-teaching would have been scheduled, it has been decided that splitting the class to allow for greater social distancing would be the best solution.
- The wearing of face coverings will be mandatory.

