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Updated Scoil Íosa Covid-19 Response Plan March 2021

The Covid-19 Response Plan for returning to school in September 2020 and ratified by the BOM at that time, is still relevant for the current reopening.

However, some additional measures are being put in place and are now attached to this Response Plan.

The Return to Work Safely Protocol, prepared by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and the Department of Health, is designed to:

- support employers and workers to put measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace; and
- to adapt their workplace procedures and practices to comply fully with the COVID19 related public health protection measures identified as necessary by the HSE. It sets out the steps that must be taken before a workplace reopens, and through its operation, including:
 - mandatory COVID-19 induction training;
 - the appointment of at least one lead worker representative charged with ensuring that COVID-19 measures are strictly adhered to in their place of work; and
 - processes to deal with suspected cases of COVID-19.

Schools are places of learning for students whilst all schools are also places of work.

The completion and implementation of this Covid-19 Response Plan is the means through which **Scoil Íosa** can best prevent the introduction and spread of Covid-19 in the school environment.

It is a very important living document which will be adapted over time to reflect the evolving COVID-19 context. The Return to Work Safely Protocol will be implemented in **Scoil Íosa**.

The Board of Management aims to facilitate the resumption of school based teaching and learning and the return to the workplace of staff. The return to the workplace will be done safely and in strict adherence to the public health advice and any guidance issued by the Department of Education.

Details for the safe reopening of Scoil Íosa and the applicable controls are outlined in this document.

[A detailed list of the day to day arrangements for managing the reopening of Scoil Íosa is attached to this document.](#)

[The measures we have put in place have been circulated to all Staff, Parents and Pupils.](#)

We have processes in place to include the following:

- arrangements to keep up to date with public health advice, changes to any government plans for the safe reopening of society and Department of Education updates
- arrangements to pass on this information in a timely manner to staff, pupils, parents and others as required
- ensured that staff have reviewed the training materials provided by the Department of Education
 - Agreed that Ms. Caroline Nealon will continue as the Lead Worker Representative
- provided staff with access to the Return to Work (RTW) form
- Have displayed additional posters and other signage to prevent introduction and spread of COVID-19
- Necessary changes have been made to Lunchbreak Times, Yard Configuration and Designated Play areas have been allocated to class groupings.
- made the necessary changes to the school or classroom layout where necessary to support the redesign of classrooms to support physical distancing
- removed unnecessary clutter to facilitate ongoing cleaning of the school taking into account the importance of having educational materials to create a stimulating learning environment
- updated the health and safety risk assessment
- made necessary arrangements to limit access to the school to necessary visitors and maintain records of contacts to the school

Induction Training

All staff will undertake and complete COVID-19 Induction Training prior to returning to the school building. The aim of such training is to ensure that staff have full knowledge and understanding of the following:

- latest up to-date advice and guidance on public health
- COVID-19 symptoms
- what to do if a staff member or pupil develops symptoms of COVID-19 while at school
- outline of the COVID-19 response plan

Staff will be kept fully informed of the control measures in place in the school and their duties and responsibilities in preventing the spread of COVID-19 and will be updated with any changes to the control measures or guidance available from the public health authorities.

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

Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)

In order to return to the workplace, staff must complete a Return to Work (RTW) form. A RTW form should be completed and returned 3 days before returning to work.

The principal will provide details to staff of any additional health and safety measures in place in the school to facilitate the staff member's return to the school facility.

Lead Worker Representative

Ms. Caroline Nealon will continue as the LWR and Mrs. Monica Duffy as Deputy LWR.

The Lead Worker Representative will work in collaboration with the Board of Management 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.

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

Strong communication and a shared collaborative approach is key to protecting against the spread of COVID-19 in schools, and looking after the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and students.

Adherence to the Return to Work Safely Protocol will only be achieved if everyone has a shared responsibility in implementing the measures contained within the Protocol.

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, pupils or others, he or she should contact the lead worker who will engage with the principal or Board of Management.

All staff, pupils, 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.

Enhanced Cleaning Regime

In line with the Public Health Advice, more regular and enhanced cleaning regimes have been introduced and will continue to be implemented in **Scoil Íosa**, to manage the risk of infection and the spread of COVID-19. Extra hours have been allocated to the cleaner. A fogging machine has been purchased and all classrooms will be sanitised daily.

Ventilation

The Department has published guidance setting out the practical steps for good ventilation in accordance with public health advice '*Practical Steps for the Deployment of Good Ventilation Practices in Schools*'. The guidance sets out an overall approach for schools that windows should be open as fully as possible when classrooms are not in use (e.g. during break-times or lunch-times (assuming not in use) and also at the end of each school day) and partially open when classrooms are in use. The guidance provides that good ventilation can be achieved in classrooms without causing discomfort, particularly during cold weather.

All necessary work will be carried out in classrooms to ensure that there is adequate ventilation. In order to complete this work, a request is being made to the DE to secure additional funding.

Hand Hygiene & PPE Needs

All PPE, consumables and equipment requirements of schools under this Roadmap, in keeping with the school's COVID-19 Response Plan, and in line with the Public Health Advice, have been purchased by School Management. These include

Pedal Bins

Hand sanitiser dispensers

Hand sanitiser liquid

Soap dispensers

Liquid soap

Toilet Roll Dispensers

Disposable Paper Towels

Wipes

Gloves

Medical Grade Face masks

Face coverings/visors

Detergents etc.

Signage

Signage is displayed throughout the school, outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene.

Posters are displayed in prominent areas such as offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilets.

Extra exterior signage has been displayed at the school gates encouraging parents to wear masks and to adhere to social distancing measures.

Making Changes to School Layout

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

The staff in **Scoil Íosa** have reconfigured classrooms and staffrooms as necessary to support physical distancing in line with the guidance in advance of the school reopening.

Health and Safety Risk Assessment

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

School Management have reviewed the emergency procedures involving, fire safety, first aid, accidents and dangerous occurrences to consider any new risks that arise due to the school's COVID-19 Response Plan.

School Management also reviewed the existing risk assessments to consider any new risks that arise due to the school's COVID-19 Response Plan.

First Aid/Emergency Procedure

The standard First Aid/emergency procedure shall continue to apply in **Scoil Íosa**. **Access to School and Contact Log**

Access to the school building will be in line with agreed school procedures.

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

The prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a crucial step in restricting the spread of the virus and protecting the health and safety of the individuals themselves and other staff, contractors and visitors at the workplace maintained. The school will maintain a log of staff and pupil contacts. A **Contact Tracing Book** will be available in both the **Junior and Senior Buildings**.

All visitors entering the school buildings will log in and log out.

All school records and data will be maintained and processed in compliance with the GDPR and the Data Protection Acts.

Curriculum Guidance –

The staff of Scoil Íosa will follow the guidance documents which the Department of Education and Skills has prepared for schools. The purpose of the guidance documents is to ensure that pupils can settle back into school, that all of the school community can stay safe and well and pupils can pick up and progress their learning, experiencing as full and enjoyable a curriculum as possible.

The principles underpinning the guidance documents are:

- Adherence to the relevant health and safety requirements
- Supporting the wellbeing of learners and school staff
- Ensuring equity and consistency in curriculum provision and pupil/student learning experiences
- Supporting pupils where they are at in their learning and providing them with what they need in order to flourish and be successful
- Establishing curriculum and instructional priorities and planning accordingly
- Developing and supporting collaboration with parents and agencies, in order to maximise outcomes for pupils in a fair and equitable way

As most primary pupils will not have been in their school building for a period of over two months, the focus at the start of this term will be on managing the transition period of returning to school from home. While the return to school offers a welcome opportunity for children to revive social connections it is also recognised that it will be an anxious time for some. Schools will be encouraged to allow time for pupils to develop the relationships necessary so that they are available and ready to participate in a meaningful way with their learning.

The Department recognises that curriculum considerations for 2020/21 school year must take account of the variable learning experiences of pupils during the period of school closure, the likely gaps in learning and the practical context in which teaching and learning will be taking place in the new school year.

Provision for curriculum also needs to take account of the likelihood that the impact of school closures on pupil experiences has not been uniform.

The Curriculum Guidance outlines the learning approaches which schools should take and the need to allow for revisiting and revising of areas of the curriculum to reinforce and consolidate learning.

Schools will also be required to reprioritise certain areas of the curriculum, especially during the initial weeks of this term, to give greater time and attention to areas such as Social, Personal and Health Education, Physical Education, Language and Mathematics.

It is intended that as schools form comprehensive pictures of where pupils are in their learning they will work towards a more typical curriculum plan

Reopening our schools is not just a matter of achieving a certain minimum physical distancing. It is also about getting students re-engaged fully with learning and socialising with their peers.

The **Scoil Íosa School Community** will rise to this challenge, and the key themes of the Public Health Advice necessary to keep us all safe will permeate throughout the school community, with everyone:

Applying common sense

Adopting a balanced approach

Doing everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into the school

Being Aware of what we can all do to protect ourselves and each other

How to recognise and report the symptoms of COVID-19

The need to stay at home if we feel unwell, and

Continuing to observe physical distancing, good hand hygiene and good respiratory etiquette.