

Ballina Primary School COVID-19 Response Plan (August 2020)

Introduction:

The Minister for Education published “The Roadmap for the Full Return to School” on the 27th July 2020. It set 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 Protocols” 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.

This COVID-19 Response Plan for Ballina Primary School is a working document that initially was used for our July Provision Programme and now has been altered to incorporate the most up-to-date guidelines as issued by the Department of Education on July 27th 2020. This plan is designed to support the staff and Board of Management in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Ballina Primary School. It is important that any proposals and recommendations in relation to the resumption of school based teaching and learning and the reopening of school facilities comply with national protocols and minimise the risk to students, staff and others. As the advice issued continues to evolve, the protocols and the measures used by the Board of Management and staff may also change. The response plan will support the sustainable reopening of our school where the overriding objective is to protect the health of staff and pupils while promoting the educational and development needs of the children in the school.

In line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol, the key to a safe and continued return to work, and re-opening of our schools requires strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between the Board of Management, staff, pupils and parents. The assistance and cooperation of all staff, pupils, parents/ guardians, contractors and visitors is critical to the success of the plan.

This document aims to provide details of:

- 1. COVID-19 School Policy**
- 2. Planning and Preparing for Return to School**
- 3. Lead Worker Representative.**
- 4. Safety Statement and Risk Assessment**
- 5. Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19**
- 6. Staff Duties**
- 7. Covid related absence management**

Note: The plan is a live working document and may be reviewed and amended to take into account new guidance from www.Gov.ie, www.dbei.ie, www.hse.ie, www.hpsc.ie, www.hsa.ie; www.education.ie;

1. Ballina Primary School COVID-19 Policy Statement

This COVID-19 policy outlines our commitment as a school to implement the plan and help prevent the spread of the virus. The policy will be signed and dated by the Principal and Chairperson of the Board of Management and brought to the attention of staff, pupils, parents and others.

COVID-19 Policy Statement

Ballina Primary School is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our staff and a safe learning environment for all our pupils. To ensure that, we have developed the following COVID-19 Response Plan. The Board of Management 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 pupils 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
- inform all staff and pupils of essential hygiene and respiratory etiquette and physical distancing requirements
- adapt the school to facilitate physical distancing as appropriate in line with the guidance and direction of the Department of Education
- keep a contact log to help with contact tracing
- ensure staff 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 pupils to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during school time
- implement cleaning in line with Department of Education advice

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: Tom Moore Date: 25/08/2020 (Chairperson)

Signed: Bernice O' Connell Date: 25/08/2020 (Príomhoide)

Lead Worker Representative: Múinteoir Adrian Ó Donnabháin.

Assistant Lead Worker Representative Múinteoir Mark O' Sullivan.

2. Planning and Preparing for Return to School

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 work must be done safely and in strict adherence to the advice and instructions of public health authorities and the Department of Education in line with *"The Roadmap for the Full Return to School"*.

The Board of Management, Principal and staff of Ballina Primary School have taken into consideration the following as outlined in *"The Roadmap for the Full Return to School"* (pgs 6-13):

- Induction Training
- Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)
- Lead Worker Representative (LWR)
- Display signage
- Making changes to school layout
- Update Safety and Risk Assessment
- Access to the School and Contact Log

3. Lead Worker Representative.

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 COVID19 in the workplace.

The purpose of this section is to set out the provisions in respect of the LWR in schools. The operation of these arrangements 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 Primary and Special Schools (available on the Department of Education website).

Collaborative Approach

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 Protocol will only be achieved if everyone has a shared responsibility 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.

Role of the Lead Worker Representative

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;
- 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;
- Keep up to date with the latest COVID-19 public health advice;
- In conjunction with school management, promote good hygiene practices 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;
- In conjunction with school management, monitor adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19;
- Conduct regular reviews of safety measures;
- 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.

What can a Lead Worker Representative (LWR) 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
- 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

Lead Worker Representative

Every school will appoint one Lead Worker Representative.

Assistant Lead Worker Representative

In schools with 30 or more staff, an Assistant Lead Worker Representative will be appointed in addition to the LWR. The role of the Assistant LWR will be to:

- assist the LWR in their duties as set out above; and
- deputise as LWR where the LWR is absent

Selection of Lead Worker Representative/ Assistant LWR

The school staff are entitled to select staff members for the LWR and Assistant LWR positions as appropriate. The LWR and Assistant LWR represents 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, if a teacher is selected for the role of LWR, then the Assistant LWR should be selected from the non-teaching staff where feasible and vice versa.

The process for the selection and appointment of the LWR/ Assistant LWR as appropriate should be arrived at by consultation and consensus at school level, through the seeking of volunteers to act in that capacity. Where there is more than one volunteer, all school staff should vote to select the LWR/ Assistant LWR.

The LWR/ Assistant LWR will, following selection by the school staff, be formally appointed by the employer. The LWR and Assistant LWR will be required to confirm, prior to taking up the role, that they have completed the provided training and that they are fully aware of the requirements of the role.

Supports for the Lead Worker Representative/ Assistant LWR

The LWR and Assistant LWR shall be entitled to:

- Receive information and training in respect of their role [further detail to be provided];
- 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;

Where the LWR/ Assistant LWR is a teacher (including a postholder), the 10 Croke Park hours which can currently be used for planning on other than a whole school basis will be utilised by the LWR and Assistant LWR to carry out their duties in that role.

Where the LWR/ Assistant LWR is an SNA, 10 of the “72 hours” will be utilised by the LWR and Assistant LWR to carry out their duties in that role.

Where the LWR/ Assistant 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.

Procedure for dealing with issues that arise

Where an issue of 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. Staff should be informed of the outcome. If agreement cannot be reached, the LWR may notify the Board of Management (Chairperson of the Board of Management in the first instance) of the issue. Action points for addressing the issue should where possible be agreed between the LWR and the Board of Management. Staff should be informed of the outcome.

4. Safety Statement and Risk Assessment

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment. A risk assessment to identify the control measures required to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 has been completed. The school will continue to review 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 will be documented. The school will continue to review 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 will be documented.

In line with “The Roadmap for the Full Return to School” (see relevant pages below) the following have been considered by the Board of Management, Principal and Staff and will remain under constant review:

- Control Measures – To prevent Introduction and Spread of COVID-19 in Schools (pg 14)
- Know the Symptoms of COVID-19 (p 15)
- Respiratory Hygiene (p 15-16)
- Hand Hygiene (p 17)
- Physical Distancing (p 17- 21)
 - Increasing Separation
 - Decreasing Interaction
 - School drop off/ collection
 - Staff
 - Staffroom
 - Corridors
 - Yard/ Supervision
- Use of PPE in Schools (p 21-22)
- Impact of COVID-19 on certain school activities (p23-24)
- Hygiene and Cleaning (p 24-25)

- Arrangements for more regular and thorough cleaning of areas and surfaces within the school will be made. Regular and thorough cleaning of communal areas and frequently touched surfaces shall be conducted, in particular, toilets, sinks, tables, chairs, door handles and staffroom. Cleaning will be performed regularly. All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area. Under no circumstances should these cleaning materials be removed from the building. Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day. There will be regular collection of used waste disposal bags from offices and other areas within the school facility. Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.).
- Access to the School Building/ Contact Log
 - Access to the school facility will be in line with agreed school procedures. Arrangement for necessary visitors such as contractors and parents/guardians will be restricted to essential purposes and limited to those who have obtained prior approval/appointment from the Principal.
 - The prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a crucial step in restricting the spread of the virus and protecting the health and safety of the individuals themselves and other staff, contractors and visitors at the workplace. A detailed sign in/sign out log of those entering the school facilities should be maintained. The school will maintain a log of staff and students contacts. In addition a visitor contact log will also be maintained.

5. Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19

Staff or pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of COVID-19. The following outlines how a school should deal with a suspected case that may arise in a school setting.

A designated isolation area should be identified within the school building. The possibility of having more than one person displaying signs of COVID-19 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 pupils.

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school the following are the procedures to be implemented:

- If the person with the suspected case is a pupil, 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 2m away from the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2m 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;
- Remember that the virus is spread by droplets and is not airborne so physical separation is enough to reduce the risk of spread to others even if they are in the same room;

- If it is not possible to maintain a distance of 2m a staff member caring for a pupil 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 who will 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;
- 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 pupil confidentiality is essential at all times.**

6. **Staff Duties.**

Staff have a statutory obligation to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of their colleagues and other parties. The cooperation and assistance of all staff is essential to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 and to protect health and safety as far as possible within the school. All staff have a key role to play. In this regard and in order to facilitate a safe return to work, these duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Adhere to the School COVID-19 Response Plan and the control measures outlined.
- Complete the RTW form before they return to work.
- Must inform the principal if there are any other circumstances relating to COVID19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to facilitate their safe return to the workplace.
- Must complete COVID-19 Induction Training and any other training required prior to their return to school.
- Must be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices.
- Coordinate and work with their colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained.
- Make themselves aware of the symptoms of COVID-19 and monitor their own wellbeing.
- Self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any symptoms of COVID-19.

- Not return to or attend school if they have symptoms of COVID-19 under any circumstances.
- If they develop any symptoms of COVID-19 whilst within the school facility, they should adhere to the procedure outlined above.
- Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.

7. COVID-19 Related Absence Management

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

Glossary of Terms

- COVID-19 Response Plan: plan designed to support the staff and BOM in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the school environment. The plan details the policies and practices necessary for a school to meet the Return to Work Safely Protocol, the Department of Education plan for school reopening and to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in the school environment. COVID-19 Response Plans for Primary and Special Schools are available on the Department's website.
- Labour Employer Economic Forum (LEEF): the forum for high level dialogue between Government, Trade Union and Employer representatives on matters of strategic national importance - involves the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Government & Employers.
- Return to Work Protocol: national protocol designed to support employers and workers to put measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.
- Safety Representative: Section 25 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 sets out the selection and role of the Safety Representative in the workplace. The rights of the Safety Representative are set out in legislation. (Note: A Safety Representative has rights and not duties under the 2005 Act). This role is separate to the LWR under COVID-19.