

# **COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of Further and Higher Education Settings**

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This is a living document and may be reviewed and amended to take into account new guidance from [www.Gov.ie](http://www.Gov.ie), [www.dbei.ie](http://www.dbei.ie), [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie), [www.hpsc.ie](http://www.hpsc.ie), [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie); [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie) or agreements with education partners as appropriate for Colleges.

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## **Introduction**

As Ireland moves out of the initial response to COVID-19 towards a gradual return to on-site activity, institutions, providers, staff and learners across further and higher education **(1)** continue to demonstrate the commitment, adaptability and resilience which has delivered a preservation of learning throughout the crisis.

Informed by the Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business, the HSA Return to Work Protocols and ongoing public health advice there will be a gradual return to on-site education and training over the coming period in parallel with a gradual lifting of restrictions on research and development activity.

Placing the needs of their students and learners **(2)** at the centre, institutions and providers, and their research, teaching, service and support staff have responded strongly and continue to adapt in response to COVID-19. Diversity and autonomy have created the conditions for the resilience of further and higher education in the face of COVID-19, providing for flexible local responsiveness. Each institution and provider is developing detailed planning and contingencies for recommencing on-site provision and communicating these to students and learners.

Further and higher education provision has continued throughout the COVID-19 crisis. There is a strong history of resilience and innovation within and across further and higher education and this capacity, coupled with financial and other supports, will be fully leveraged to deliver a rounded student and learner experience for the coming year.

To complement and underpin this work the **COVID-19 Adaptation Framework** provides a shared structure for Government, sectors, institutions and providers to use in preparing their plans, continuing to adapt in response to changes in public health advice and ensuring that consistently high-quality standards can be achieved in an inclusive way. Changes to public health advice that are likely to be made throughout 2020/21 will change and shape the learning experience in further and higher education and the framework has been developed in a way that eases accommodation of these changes for the sector.

The **Further and Higher Education Roadmap** provides information about what can be expected from the learning experience based on the information available to date for programmes that will continue throughout summer 2020 and for the 2020/21 academic year.

The diversity of provision in further and higher education means that situation specific responses within the overall roadmap are necessary. Detailed information is available to students and learners directly from their institutions and providers and will be frequently updated. More detailed practical information in relation to health guidelines for further and higher education is set out in the accompanying **Guidance for Further and Higher Education for Returning to On-site Activity in 2020** which will be updated on a regular basis.

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. In addition to being places of learning, Colleges are also places of work. This document sets out the information that Colleges need to implement a College COVID-19 Response Plan, including a COVID-19 policy, lead worker representative/s (LWR) and a 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 further education colleges 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 further education colleges to minimise the risk of infection while recognising that no interpersonal activity is without risk of transmission of infection at any time.

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 colleges can take to do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into colleges and the steps that can be taken to reduce the likelihood of the spread within the college itself in the event that COVID-19 is introduced to the college.

The Department has worked intensively with the education partners to develop consistent plans, advice, protocols and guidance for Colleges, including the College COVID-19 Response plan. There is a suite of documentation available to support further education colleges to reopen safely.

In addition the Department has a communication plan for the college reopening which focuses on ensuring that colleges, college communities and all stakeholders will have the relevant information to support the reopening and continued operation of colleges.

## **1) What is a COVID-19 Response Plan?**

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

The COVID-19 Response Plan details the policies and practices necessary for a College to meet the Government's 'Guidance for Further and Higher Education for returning to on-site activity in 2020: Roadmap and COVID-19 Adaptation Framework', the Department of Education plan for the college reopening that will aim to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in the college environment.

It is important that the resumption of college based teaching and learning and the reopening of Colleges complies with the public health advice and guidance documents prepared by the Department. Doing so minimises the risk to students, staff and others. The response plan supports the sustainable reopening of College where the overriding objective is to protect the health of staff and students while promoting the educational needs of the students. 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 Colleges.

In line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol, the key to a safe and sustainable return to work, and reopening of Colleges requires strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between the BOM, staff, and students.

The assistance and cooperation of all staff, students, contractors and visitors is critical to the success of the plan.

*Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information provided in this document. However, should errors or omissions be identified, please notify us so that appropriate measures can be taken to rectify same.*

## 2) College COVID-19 Policy

A COVID-19 policy outlines the commitment of the College to implement the plan and help prevent the spread of the virus. The policy will be signed and dated by the chairperson of the BOM and the Principal, and also brought to the attention of the staff, students, and others. Colleges must have a COVID-19 policy in place prior to the reopening of Colleges for the 2020/21 College year. A template of the College COVID-19 policy can be found at **Appendix 1**.

## 3) Planning and Preparing for Return to College

The BOM/ETB aims to facilitate the resumption of College based teaching and learning and the return to the workplace of staff. The return to the workplace must be done safely and in strict adherence to the public health advice and any guidance issued by the Department of Education.

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

Before reopening Colleges for the 2020/21 College year each College will need to have processes in place to include the following:

- Means of keeping up to date with public health advice, changes to any Government plans for the safe reopening of society and Department of Education updates;
- Means of passing on this information in a timely manner to staff, students, and others as required;
- Ensured that staff have reviewed the training materials provided by the Department of Education (**details at Section 4.1**);
- Provided staff with access to the Return to Work (RTW) form (**details at Section 4.2**);
- Identified a Lead Worker representative (**details at Section 4.3**);
- Displayed posters and other signage to prevent introduction and spread of COVID-19 (**details at Section 4.4**);
- Made the necessary changes to the College layout to support the redesign of classrooms to support physical distancing (**details at Section 4.5**);
- Removed unnecessary clutter to facilitate ongoing cleaning of the College but take into account the importance of having educational materials to create a stimulating learning environment;
- Updated the health and safety risk assessment (**details at Section 4.6**);
- Made necessary arrangements to restrict access to the College and maintain records of contacts to the College (**details at 4.7**);
- Reviewed the College buildings to check the following:
  - Does the water system need flushing at outlets following low usage to prevent Legionella disease;
  - Has College equipment and mechanical ventilation been checked for signs of deterioration or damage before being used again;
  - Have bin collections and other essential services resumed.

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

## 4.1) Induction Training

All staff will undertake and complete COVID-19 Induction Training prior to returning to the College 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 College
- Outline of the COVID-19 response plan

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

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

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

## 4.2) Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)

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

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

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

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

### People at very high risk (extremely vulnerable):

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

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

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

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

### **4.3) Lead Worker Representative**

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

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

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

Strong communication and a shared collaborative approach is key to protecting against the spread of COVID-19 in Colleges, 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 College management.

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

In summary, the role of the LWR is to:

- Represent all staff in the workplace regardless of role, and be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of different staff cohorts;

- Keep up to date with the latest COVID-19 public health advice;
- Work collaboratively with College management to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19;
- Consult with College 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 College management, such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette along with maintaining social distancing in accordance with public health advice;
- Assist College 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 College 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 College management and keep records of such issues and actions taken to rectify them;
- Consult with the College management on the College's COVID-19 Response Plan in the event of someone developing COVID-19 while in College including the location of an isolation area and a safe route to that area;
- Following any incident, assess with the College management any follow up action that is required;
- Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace;
- Make representations to College management on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.

If a staff member has any concerns or observations in relation to the COVID-19 response plan, control measures or the adherence to such measures by staff, students or other s/he should contact the LWR/s who will engage with the Principal/ETB.

Names of Lead Worker Representative/s:	Contact details:
Ellen Madigan	064 410390
Antoinette O'Donovan	061 410390

All staff, students, 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 Colleges is set out at **Appendix 3**.



#### 4.4) **Signage**

Colleges 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 Colleges with age appropriate key health messages – hand washing, sneeze and cough etiquette etc.

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

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

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

#### 4.5) **Making Changes to College Layout**

Maintaining physical distancing in the College environment is recommended as one of the key control measures to minimize the risk of the introduction and spread of COVID-19. Further information on how physical distancing can be used in the College environment is found at **Section 5.4** below.

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

#### 4.6) **Health and Safety Risk Assessment**

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the College environment. A template risk assessment to identify the control measures required to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 in College settings is attached at **Appendix 4**.

It is important that Colleges review their emergency procedures involving, fire safety, first aid, accidents and dangerous occurrences to consider any new risks that arise due to the College's COVID-19 Response Plan. Any changes to the Colleges existing emergency procedures should be documented and incorporated into the College's safety statement.

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

#### **First Aid/emergency procedure**

The standard First Aid/emergency procedure shall continue to apply in Colleges. In an emergency or in case of a serious incident, Colleges should call for an ambulance or the fire brigade on 112/999 giving details of location and type of medical incident.

## **4.7) Access to the College and Contact Log**

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

Arrangement for necessary visitors such as contractors 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 Colleges and centres for education to support them as appropriate in the implementation of public health advice relating to creating a safe learning and working environment for all.

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

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

<https://www.dataprotection.ie/en/news-media/data-protection-implications-return-work-safely-protocol>

Colleges are reminded that all College 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 College (or ETB) in their role as data controller.

## **Control Measures - To Prevent Introduction and Spread of COVID-19 in Colleges**

One of the key messages to manage the risks of COVID-19 is to do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into the College. If infection is not introduced it cannot be spread. The risk of spreading the infection once introduced exists in all interpersonal interactions; student - student, tutor - tutor and tutor- student, and must be managed in all settings.

A range of essential control measures have been implemented to reduce the risk of the spread of COVID - 19 virus and to protect the safety, health and welfare of staff, students, and visitors as far as possible within the College. The control measures shall continue to be reviewed and updated as required on an ongoing basis.

It is critical that staff, students, and visitors are aware of, and adhere to, the control measures outlined and that they fully cooperate with all health and safety requirements.

*Staff, should note that they have a legal obligation under Section 13 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 to comply with health and safety requirements and to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves, their colleagues and other parties within the workplace.*

### ***How to Minimise the Risk of Introduction of COVID-19 into Colleges:***

Promote awareness of COVID-19 symptoms (**details at Section 5.1**);

- Advise staff and students that have symptoms not to attend College, to phone their doctor and to follow HSE guidance on self-isolation;
- Advise staff and students not to attend College if they have been identified by the HSE as contact for a person with COVID-19 and to follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement;
- Advise staff and students that develop symptoms at College to bring this to the attention of the principal (or deputy principal if the principal is unavailable) promptly;
- Ensure that staff and students know the protocol for managing a suspected case of COVID-19 in College (**details at Section 8**);
- Advise everyone entering the College building that they needs to perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser;
- Advise all relevant parties that visitors to the College during the day should be by prior arrangement with the principal and should be received at a specific contract point;
- Physical distancing of 2 metres should be maintained between staff and visitors where possible.

### 5.1) **Know the Symptoms of COVID-19**

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

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

### 5.2) **Respiratory Hygiene**

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

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

### 5.3) **Hand Hygiene**

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

Colleges should promote good hygiene and display posters throughout the Colleges on how to wash your hands. Follow the HSE guidelines on handwashing:

<https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html>

Hand hygiene can be achieved by hand washing or use of a hand sanitiser (when hands look clean).

Use of hand hygiene facilities including wash hand basins needs to be managed so as to avoid congregation of people waiting to use wash hand basins and hand sanitisers.

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

Warm water is preferable to hot or cold water for hand washing but if the plumbing system only supplies cold water, a soap that emulsifies easily in cold water should be used.

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

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

Hot air dryers are an acceptable alternative for hand drying but must be regularly maintained. There is no evidence that hand dryers are associated with increased risk of transmission of COVID-19.

Posters displaying hand washing techniques and promoting hand washing should be placed on walls adjacent to washing facilities and can be laminated or placed in a plastic sleeve.

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

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

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

### **Frequency of Hand Hygiene**

Students and staff should perform hand hygiene:

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

## **5.4) Physical Distancing**

Physical distancing is an important part of the country's delay strategy to slow the spread of COVID-19 and to limit transmission of the virus. It does this by minimizing contact between healthy individuals and potentially asymptomatic (showing no symptoms), pre-symptomatic (before showing any symptoms), or mildly symptomatic individuals. In Ireland, this advice has proven to be effective in reducing the incidence of the virus and protecting those most at risk in Irish society. The current health advice, as reflected in the Protocol, is that the recommended distance to be maintained between people to minimise risk of transmission is 2 metres.

In that context, higher education and further education facilities are advised that physical distancing of 2 metres be maintained. The impact of physical distancing on capacity of teaching areas is acknowledged, however, this impact may be attenuated through staggered provision of classes/lectures, a widening of

opening hours and other sectoral and context-specific measures approved by Government within public health guidelines.

It is also recognised that it is not always possible for staff to maintain physical distance from students and it is not appropriate that they would always be expected to do so where this could have a detrimental impact on the student.

**However where possible staff should maintain a minimum of 2m distance. They should also take measures to avoid close contact at face to face level such as remaining standing rather than sitting beside/crouching down.**

Physical distancing falls into two categories:

- Increasing separation
- Decreasing interaction

### ***Increasing separation***

Given that each College setting is different in terms of (i) location; (ii) physical layout (iii) available space within the College; and (iv) student numbers; Colleges themselves are best placed to decide on the appropriate reconfigurations / operational changes necessary to maintain physical distancing.

Some measures that could be considered include:

1. Reconfigure class spaces to maximise physical distancing;
2. Utilising and reconfiguring all available space in the College in order to maximise physical distancing;
3. Review Timetables;
4. Reconfiguring Classes;
5. Consider Use of Live Streaming within the College; and
6. Accessing available spaces within the local community

### ***Decreasing interaction***

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

In Colleges physical distancing of 2m where possible should be maintained between desks or between individual students or staff.

As far as possible and practical, students would remain in the classroom and tutors would move between rooms.

As far as possible and practical students would be assigned to a main class cohort which would remain in the classroom for most subjects, with tutors moving between rooms.

Hand washing and/or sanitising would be required when moving between classes by tutors and students.

Physical distancing between the tutor and class would be observed.

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

Limit interaction on arrival and departure and in hallways and other shared areas.

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

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

Staff and students should avoid sharing of personal items.

Where teaching and learning involves use of keyboards or tablets, the contact surface of the device should be cleaned regularly and hand hygiene encouraged.

## **Physical Distancing outside of the classroom and within the College**

### **Start of the day/end of the day**

Walking/cycling to College should be encouraged as much as possible.

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

Staggered start times should be arranged where feasible.

If Colleges have additional access points, consideration may be given to whether they can be used to reduce congestion.

Students should head straight to their designated learning space/classroom.

### **Staff**

A distance of 2m is recommended for physical distancing by staff. This is particularly relevant to distancing between adults when they are not engaged in teaching such as the staff room and arriving to work.

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

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

Staff meetings should be held remotely or in small groups or in large spaces to facilitate physical distancing.

Implement no hand shaking policy.

Minimise gathering at the beginning or end of the College day.

### **Corridors and Stairwells**

Briefly passing someone in a hall is very unlikely to contribute significantly to the spread of infection if people do not have physical contact and avoid informal group discussions.

## 5.5) Use of PPE in Colleges

PPE will not be required to be worn within Colleges according to current occupational and public health guidance. However, for a limited number of staff, PPE will need to be used occasionally or constantly due to the nature of certain work activities or work areas. These might include roles such as:

- Performing intimate care
- Where a suspected case of COVID-19 is identified while the College is in operation
- Where staff are particularly vulnerable to infection but are not in the list of those categorised as people in very high risk groups, or may be living with people who are in a very high risk category.

Appropriate PPE will be available for dealing with suspected COVID-19 cases, intimate care needs and for first aid.

### Masks

In line with the current health advice, further and higher education institutions may advise staff and students that the wearing of face coverings is recommended where it is difficult to practice social distancing, particularly in instances where very close contact cannot be avoided i.e. direct instruction requiring proximity of less than 1 metre.

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

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

For staff, face coverings should not be required if physical distancing is possible and practiced appropriately. Wearing a face covering will conceal facial expression and make communication difficult.

The use of a visor as an alternative may be considered where there is a concern regarding prolonged close contact and exposure to fluid/respiratory droplets. It can also be used, in exceptional circumstances, where it has not been possible, notwithstanding the application of the measures in the framework on physical distancing set out above, to achieve physical distancing by organisational means for large classes. [Advice on how to properly use face coverings can be found here.](#)

### Gloves

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

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

## 6) Hygiene and Cleaning in Colleges

The Department of Education will provide additional funding to Colleges to support the enhanced cleaning required to minimise the risks of COVID-19. Details of the funding supports will be provided to Colleges by way of circular and will be updated as required. The funding will be provided to Colleges in advance of reopening.

The specific advice in relation to College cleaning is set out in the HPSC advice and will be covered in the induction training. This advice sets out the cleaning regime required to support Colleges to prevent COVID-19 infections and the enhanced cleaning required in the event of a suspected cases of COVID-19. Colleges are asked to carefully read and understand the cleaning advice and to apply that to all areas of the College as appropriate.

Colleges are reminded to take particular care of the hygiene arrangements for wash hand and toilet facilities.

In summary, each College setting should be cleaned at **least once per day**. Additional cleaning if available should be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, hand rails, chairs/arm rests, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities.

If students are moving between classrooms consideration may be given to appropriate cleaning products being provided to enable them to wipe down their desk, chair and surface before leaving the room.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The rooms should be cleaned as soon as practicable possible.

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

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

Person/s assigned to cleaning should avoid touching their face while they are cleaning and household gloves and a plastic apron.

Clean the environment and furniture using disposable cleaning cloths and a household detergent followed by disinfection with a chlorine based product (household bleach).

Pay special attention to frequently touched surfaces, the back of chairs, couches, door handles and any surfaces that are visibly soiled with body fluids.

Once the room has been cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry, the room can be reused.

## **7) Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19**

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



A designated isolation area should be identified within the College 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 College the following are the procedures to be implemented:

- 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;
- 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 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 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 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.

## **8) Staff Duties**

Staff have a statutory obligation to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of their colleagues and other parties.

The cooperation and assistance of all staff is essential to reduce the risk of spread of COVID19 and to protect health and safety as far as possible within the College. 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 College COVID-19 Response Plan and the control measures outlined.
- Complete the RTW form before they return to work.
- Must inform the Principal if there are any other circumstances relating to COVID-19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to facilitate their safe return to the workplace.
- Must complete COVID-19 Induction Training and any other training required prior to their return to College.
- Must be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette. Coordinate practices and work with their colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained.
- Make themselves aware of the symptoms of COVID-19 and monitor their own wellbeing.
- Self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any symptoms of COVID-19.
- Not return to or attend College if they have symptoms of COVID-19 under any circumstances.
- Adhere to the procedure outlined above if they develop any symptoms of COVID-19 whilst within the College facility. .
- Keep themselves informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.

## **9) 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.

## **10) Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme**

The Department recognises the need for College staff wellbeing and collective self-care. Support for College 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 Colleges. The aim of the Occupational Health Strategy is to promote the health and wellbeing of employees in the workplace, with a strong focus on prevention. The Occupational Health Strategy comprises the Employee Assistance Service and the Occupational Health Service. The Employee Assistance Service (EAS) is provided by Spectrum.Life under the logo of 'Wellbeing Together: Folláinne Le Chéile'.

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



## **APPENDIX 1**

## **COVID-19 Policy Statement**

Central College Limerick 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 BOM 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
- Agree with staff on a worker representative, who is easily identifiable to carry out the role outline in this plan
- 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
- Inform all staff and students of essential hygiene and respiratory etiquette, as well as physical distancing requirements
- Adapt the college to facilitate physical distancing as appropriate, in line with public health guidance and direction from the Department of Education
- Implement the agreed procedures to be followed in the event of someone showing symptoms of Covid-19 while at college
- Provide instruction for both staff and students to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of Covid-19 while during the college day
- Implement cleaning protocols in line with advice from the Department of Education

All college staff will be consulted on an ongoing basis and feedback is encouraged on any concerns or issues they may have. This can be done through the Lead Work Representatives, who will be supported in line with agreement from the Department of Education and education partners.

**Signed:** Sinéad Moloney

**Date:** 21/09/2020

**Principal**

**Signed:** Tom O'Dwyer

**Date:** 21/09/2020

**BOM Chairperson**

## Appendix 2 Pre-Return to Work Questionnaire COVID-19

This questionnaire must be completed by staff **at least 3 days** in advance of returning to work. If the answer is Yes to any of the below questions, you are advised to seek medical advice before returning to work.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of College: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

	Questions	YES	NO
1.	Do you have symptoms of cough, fever, high temperature, sore throat, runny nose, breathlessness or flu like symptoms now or in the past 14 days?		
2.	Have you been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection in the last 14 days?		
3.	Have you been advised by the HSE that you are you a close contact of a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days?		
4.	Have you been advised by a doctor to self-isolate at this time?		
5.	Have you been advised by a doctor to cocoon at this time?		
6.	Have you been advised by your doctor that you are in the very high risk group? If yes, please liaise with your doctor and Principal re return to work.		

I confirm, to the best of my knowledge that I have no symptoms of COVID-19, am not self-isolating, awaiting results of a COVID-19 test or been advised to restrict my movements. Please note: The College is collecting this sensitive personal data for the purposes of maintaining safety within the workplace in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The legal basis for collecting this data is based on vital public health interests and maintaining occupational health and will be held securely in line with our retention policy.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 3 Lead Worker Representative – Colleges**

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 Colleges. These arrangements will operate for the 2020/21 College 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 Colleges (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.

Strong communication and a shared collaborative approach is key to protecting against the spread of COVID-19 in Colleges, 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 College 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 College management to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19;
- Consult with College 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 College management, such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette along with maintaining social distancing in accordance with public health advice;
- Assist College 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 College 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 College management and keep records of such issues and actions taken to rectify them;
- Consult with the College management on the College's COVID-19 Response Plan in the event of someone developing COVID-19 while in College including the location of an isolation area and a safe route to that area;
- Following any incident, assess with the College management any follow up action that is required;
- Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace;
- Make representations to College 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, College 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 College facilities, including classrooms, corridors, halls, open areas, entry and exit points, College grounds etc.
- Implementation of one-way systems in the College to ensure social distancing including when entering and exiting the College
- Hand Hygiene facilities including their location and whether they are stocked and maintained
- Hand sanitising
- Staff awareness around hand hygiene in the College
- 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 College will appoint one Lead Worker Representative.

In Colleges with more than 40 staff, a second Lead Worker Representative will be appointed.

## 6. Selection of Lead Worker Representative(s)

The College 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 College 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 College 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 College staff have a vote to select the LWR(s).

The LWR(s) will, following selection by the College 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 [*further detail to be provided*];
- Be consulted by College management on the control measures being put in place by the College to minimise the risk of being exposed to COVID-19;
- Regular communication with College 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 tutor, 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 tutor selected for the LWR would cause curricular/timetabling difficulties which cannot be resolved, College management will examine internal and external possibilities to enable the tutor'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 College 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 College 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](#).

## 9. Glossary of Terms

- **COVID-19 Response Plan:** plan designed to support the staff and BOM/ ETB in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the College environment. The plan details the policies and practices necessary for a College to meet the Return to Work Safely Protocol, the Department of Education plan for College reopening and to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in the College environment. COVID-19 Response Plans for Colleges 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, but the Safety Representative may act as the LWR if selected to do so by the staff.

## TEMPLATE EMAIL TO STAFF REGARDING LEAD WORKER REPRESENTATIVE APPOINTMENT PROCESS

Dear All,

As you will be aware, significant work and consultation has taken place to enable a full return to College from the beginning of the 2020/21 College year.

The resumption of College-based teaching and learning and the return to the workplace of staff must be done safely and in strict adherence to the advice and instructions of public health authorities and the Government.

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. In addition, every College has a COVID-19 Response Plan in place.

The Return to Work Safely 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.

A copy of the College's COVID-19 Response Plan is attached and this includes further detail on the role of the Lead Worker Representative.

In this College, there are (1 or 2 – ***delete as appropriate***) Lead Worker Representative positions.

Under the Protocol, the College staff are entitled to select staff members for the LWR position(s). In this regard, I am now inviting expressions of interest from staff for these positions, by return email.

The LWR(s) 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. Where a College 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 College and one or more expressions of interest are received from that cohort.

Training for the role will be provided.

If an election is necessary, all College staff have a vote to select the LWR(s). Further details on this process will be sent to you if this arises. Following selection by the College staff, the LWR(s) will be formally appointed. The LWR details will be sent to all staff following their appointment.

Yours sincerely,

---

Principal

## Appendix 4 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 present? Y/N	What is the risk?	Risk rating H=High M=Medium L=Low	Controls (When all controls in place risk will be reduced)	Is this control in place?	Action/to do list/outstanding controls  *Risk rating applies to outstanding controls outlined in this column	Person responsible	Signature and date when action
COVID-19	N	Illness	H	College Covid-19 Response Plan in place in line with Department of Education guidance and the Return to Work Safely Protocol and public health advice		<i>Examples of Actions</i>  Follow public health guidance from HSE re hygiene and respiratory etiquette  Complete College COVID-19 Policy Statement  Return to Work Forms received and reviewed  Undertake Induction Training  Maintain log of staff	Name of staff member	

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 practicable.

Risk Assessment carried out by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ / /

**Appendix 5**

**Contact Tracing Log**

<b>Name of College</b>			<b>College Contact Person</b>	
<b>Address of College</b>			<b>For Queries only: Phone No</b>	
			<b>Email</b>	
<b>Name of Visitor</b>				Was the visit pre-arranged with the Principal? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Date of Visit</b>	__ __ / __ __ / _____	<b>Time</b>	<b>Entry to College</b> _____ am <input type="checkbox"/> pm <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Exit from College</b> _____ am <input type="checkbox"/> pm <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Visitor Status</b>	Contractor <input type="checkbox"/>		Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Please complete: _____
<b>Contact details of visitor</b>	Company Name (if applicable)			
	Address			
	Contact No.		Email Address	
	Reason for Visit			
<b>Who the visitor met (separate line required for each person the visitor met)</b>				
<b>Name of Person visited</b>				<b>Length of time spent with each person in the College</b>

## **Appendix 6**

## **Checklist for College Management**

This checklist supports planning and preparation, control measures and induction needed to support a safe return to College for students, staff, 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**

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?
2. Have you appointed staff member/s to the LWR position (detailed at Section 4.3 above) in accordance with the agreed protocol?
3. Have you advised staff as to who has been appointed to the position of LWR?
4. Have you prepared a College COVID-19 response plan and made it available to staff and students? ***Department of Education guidance and templates provided***
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?
6. Have you displayed the COVID-19 posters in suitable locations highlighting the signs and symptoms of COVID-19?
7. Have you told staff and students of the purpose of the COVID-19 contact log?
8. Have you a COVID-19 contact log in place to support HSE tracing efforts if required? ***(Contact log template attached).***
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?
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? ***(Risk template attached)***
11. Have you updated emergency plans, in particular to take account of the COVID response plan?

### **Staff**

12. Have you made available to each staff member a COVID-19 return-to-work form to be completed and returned 3 days before they return to the workplace? ***(Template attached)***
13. Are you aware of staff members who are at very high risk under the HSE guidance on people most at risk (HSE guidance on people most at-risk) and advised them of the Department of Education's agreed arrangements for management of those staff?
14. Have you advised staff and students they must stay at home if sick or if they have any symptoms of COVID-19?

15. Have you told staff and students what to do and what to expect if they start to develop symptoms of COVID-19 while in College, including where the isolation area is?
16. Have you advised staff of the availability of the supports of the occupational health and wellbeing programme through Spectrum Life?

### **Training and Induction**

17. Have you advised staff and students to view the Department of Education's training materials which are available online?
18. Have you taken the necessary steps to update your College induction / familiarisation training to include all information relating to COVID-19?
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).*

### **Buildings / Equipment**

20. If you have mechanical ventilation does it need cleaning or maintenance before the College reopens?
21. Does your water system need flushing at outlets following low usage to prevent Legionnaire's Disease?
22. Have you visually checked, or had an appropriate person check, all equipment in the College for signs of deterioration or damage before being used again?
23. Have you arranged for the College including all equipment, desks, benches, doors and frequently touched surfaces points, been thoroughly cleaned before reopening?

### **Control Measures in place**

#### **Hand / respiratory hygiene**

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 Colleges, from the national framework provided by the Department? This framework close to being finalised and will be available for drawdown with guidance as to how and what to order accompanying it.
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?
26. Have arrangements been made for staff and students to have regular access to hand-washing/hand sanitising facilities as appropriate?
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 College buildings?
28. Have you made arrangements to ensure hand hygiene facilities are regularly checked and well-stocked?
29. Does the alcohol-based hand sanitiser have at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol as the active ingredient?
30. Have you informed staff and students about the importance of hand washing?

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?
32. Have you shown staff and students how to use hand sanitiser correctly and where hand-sanitising stations are located?
33. Have you displayed posters on how to wash hands correctly in appropriate locations?
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
  - before leaving home
  - when arriving/leaving the College /other sites
  - 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 virus, including?
  - avoid touching the face, eyes, nose and mouth
  - cover coughs and sneezes with an elbow or a tissue
  - dispose of tissues in a covered bin

### **Physical Distancing:**

36. Have you identified all available College space to be used to maximise physical distancing?
37. Have you reviewed the templates provided by the Department of Education which show options for revised layout of College rooms to meet physical distancing requirements?
38. Have you arranged to revise the layout of the rooms and furniture as per the Department guidelines?
39. Have you arranged in each room that the tutor's desk should be at 2m away from student desks?
40. Have you arranged in each room that students would be, at least 2m away from each other?
41. Have you where possible and practicable assigned students to main class cohorts to minimise the risk of infection from COVID-19?
42. Have you arranged the timetable to facilitate double classes where possible and practicable?
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?
44. Have you made arrangements to limit interaction on arrival and departure from College and in other shared areas?
45. Have you encouraged walking or cycling to College as much as possible?

46. Have you made arrangements, in so far as possible, to open additional access points to College to reduce congestion?
47. Can you provide a one system for entering and exiting the College, where practical?
48. Have you arranged for staff meetings to be held remotely or in small groups or in large spaces to facilitate physical distancing?
49. Have you taken steps to minimise rotation of staff between classes where possible?
50. Have you a system to regularly remind staff and students to maintain physical distancing?
51. Have you advised staff and students not to shake hands and to avoid any physical contact?
52. Have you stopped all non-essential travel for College activities?

### **Visitors to Colleges**

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



## **Appendix 7 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 tutor/staff member will be required to manage a suspected case in line with the protocol and training.

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

### **Isolation Area**

1. Have you identified a place that can be used as an isolation area, preferably with a door that can close?
2. The isolation area does not have to be a separate room but if it is not a room it should be 2m away from others in the room.
3. Is the isolation area accessible, including to staff and students with disabilities?
4. Is the route to the isolation area accessible?
5. Have you a contingency plan for dealing with more than one suspected case of COVID-19?
6. Are the following available in the isolation area(s)?
  - Tissues
  - Hand sanitiser
  - Disinfectant/wipes
  - Gloves/Masks
  - Waste Bags
  - Bins

### **Isolating a Person**

7. Are procedures in place to accompany the infected person to the isolation area, along the isolation route with physical distancing from them?
8. Are staff familiar with this procedure?
9. Have others been advised to maintain a distance of at least 2m from the affected person at all times? (it is intended that this will be dealt with as part of DES online training)
10. Is there a disposable mask to wear for the affected person while in the common area and when exiting the building?

### **Arranging for the affected person to leave the College**

11. Staff – have you established by asking them if the staff members feel well enough to travel home?
12. Student – have you immediately contacted their emergency contact and arranged for them to collect the student? Under no circumstances can a student use public or College 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?
18. Has the affected person been advised to continue wearing the face mask until they reach home?

### **Follow up**

19. Have you carried out an assessment of the incident to identify any follow-up actions needed?
20. Have you advised the LWR of the incident in accordance with the agreed protocol?
21. Are you available to provide advice and assistance if contacted by the HSE?

### **Cleaning**

22. Have you taken the isolation area out-of-use until cleaned and disinfected?
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? *(It is intended to provide online training for cleaning staff. Appropriate PPE will be available to Colleges through the national procurement process which Colleges can access in line with the guidance which will be provided shortly)*

## **Appendix 8      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 College principal to act as a Lead Worker Representative for your College, in accordance with the process for *lead worker representative/s in Colleges 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 College?
8. Have you been made aware of the control measures your College 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 College? (*DES template Return-to-Work form available*)
11. Are you aware of the control measures your College has put in place to minimise the risk of you and others being exposed to COVID-19? (*Checklist for College Management available*)
12. On behalf of the employer did your College 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 College 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 College COVID-19 plan?
14. Are you co-operating with your College 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 College 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 College?
20. Are you co-operating with your College 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 College?
22. Once the affected person has left the College, 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 College?
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 College 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/ College management with the supports to which you are entitled in your role as Lead Worker Representative?
29. If you are a tutor, 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?
31. If you are a College secretary or a caretaker have your duties been re-prioritised by College 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 9 Checklist for Cleaning**

1. 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 reopening of Colleges, in particular **Section 5.6 Environmental Hygiene**?
3. Have you explained the need for the enhanced cleaning regime to staff and students?
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?
5. Have you sufficient cleaning materials in place to support the enhanced cleaning regime?
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?
8. Are you familiar with the cleaning options for College settings set out in the HPSC health advice for Colleges for surfaces, toilets, cleaning equipment, PPE and waste management?
9. Are you aware that each College setting should be cleaned once per day?
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.** Details of how to clean following a suspected case of COVID-19 are at **Section 7 of the Plan above** (can be added here again if considered useful)
  - 16.** If disinfection of contaminated surfaces is required, is a system in place to do this following cleaning?
  - 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?
  - 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.*
  - 19.** Have you ensured there is a system in place to make sure reusable cleaning equipment including mop heads and non-disposable cloths are clean 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?