**Killarney School of English Covid 19 Response Plan**

**Aims**

This response plan aims to set out the protocols and procedures necessary for the prevention and containment of the COVID-19 virus in our school on reopening. The pandemic has impacted severely on every part of our society and our economy. By adhering to strict rules we have made enormous progress in containing the spread of the virus in society and saving lives. However, in order to maintain the gains that have been made and ensure the health and safety of every student and member of staff we need to all follow a set of strict guidelines when returning to work. These guidelines have been based on **the Return to Work Safely Protocol** (8/5/2020) produced jointly by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) and the Health Services Executive (HSE) and adapted specifically for the school through a process of consultation with staff and management.

This non-exhaustive document describes the steps that KSOE , its staff and students, shall take in order to reduce the risk of the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. It also provides advice on the measures currently recommended by Government to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the community. However, changes are happening on an almost daily basis which puts an onus on us, the employer, employees and students to keep up to date with the latest measures introduced by Government and any advice issued as a result.

**Covid Representative**

Strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between management, teachers and students is key to ensuring the effectiveness of the measures we are putting in place.

With this in mind we have assigned a representative to ensure that guidelines are strictly adhered to in the school and that all procedures, guidelines are clearly communicated to all stakeholders. This representative will have undergone the necessary training and will have a structured framework to follow in order to be in a suitable position to engage in a regular and meaningful way with students, teachers and management.

**Covid -19**

**Background**

The outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) has evolved rapidly and the Department of Health is leading the Government response in Ireland to this national public health emergency and it, along with the Health Service Executive’s (HSE) Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HSPC), is providing up to date information and advice on its website.

The advice and guidance for Ireland takes account of guidance from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the World Health Organization, and decisions of the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHET). An Expert Advisory Group (EAG), which includes experts in Public Health Medicine, Infectious Diseases, Infection Prevention and Control and Virology, has also been established which provides expert scientific advice relating to the novel coronavirus and advises NPHET.

**Symptoms**

Infection with the virus that causes COVID-19 can cause illness, ranging from mild to severe, and, in some cases, can be fatal. It can take anything from 2 days up to 14 days for symptoms of coronavirus to appear. They can be similar to the symptoms of cold and flu.

Common symptoms of coronavirus include:

* a fever (high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above).
* a cough - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry.
* shortness of breath or breathing difficulties.

For the complete list of symptoms, please refer to the HSE Website.

Some people infected with the virus, so called asymptomatic cases, have experienced no symptoms at all.

**How COVID-19 Spreads**

The virus that causes COVID-19 disease is spread from people in fluid and in droplets scattered from the nose or mouth of an infected person when the person with COVID-19 coughs, sneezes or speaks. The fluid or droplets land on objects and surfaces around the infected person. Other people contaminate their hands by touching these objects or surfaces and then bring the virus into contact with their eyes, nose or mouth by touching them with their contaminated hands. COVID-19 can also spread if droplets from an infected person land directly on the mucous membranes of the eye, nose or mouth of a person standing close to them.

It is still not known how long the virus survives on surfaces in different conditions. The period of survival may vary under different conditions (e.g. type of surface, temperature or humidity of the environment). Studies indicate that it can persist on surfaces for hours and up to several days in the absence of effective cleaning. Thorough and regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces is essential. If disinfection is required it must be performed in addition to cleaning, never as a substitute for cleaning.

While people are most likely to pass on the infection when they have symptoms, current information suggests that some infected people spread the virus to others prior to developing or displaying symptoms themselves.

**Prior to returning to work KSOE has**

* developed a business COVID-19 Response Plan.
* updated our occupational health and safety risk assessments and safety statement. In doing this we have taken into account

1. the new level(s) of risk associated with various workplaces and work activities undertaken at the school. For example, where, how and to what sources of COVID-19 might teachers and students be exposed, including the general public, customers, activity leaders and others (please see link….;)
2. Staff and student’s individual risk factors (e.g. age, presence of underlying medical conditions, etc.).

* created a response plan to deal with a suspected case of COVID-19 arising during school hours.
* created a contact log at reception to facilitate contact tracing.
* established a pre-return to work form for students and staff to complete at least 3 days in advance of the return to work. This form seeks confirmation that the worker, to the best of their knowledge, has no symptoms of COVID-19 and also confirms that the worker is not self-isolating or awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test.
* displayed information on signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
* provided up to date information on the Public Health advice issued by the HSE and Gov.ie.
* reviewed and revised existing sick leave policies and amended as appropriate and in line with normal procedures.
* designated a representative to address any worker concerns and communicate the messages about good hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and physical distancing.
* made available the necessary public health advice from the HSE and other sources as appropriate to staff and students .As information about the virus is evolving, public health advice is being updated on a regular basis, and it is important for employers and workers to recognise that flexibility will be required on the part of employers and workers in meeting the measures to reduce the spread.
* created an induction training for all students and staff. This training includes the latest up to-date advice and guidance on public health: what a worker should do if they develop symptoms of COVID-19; details of how the workplace is organised to address the risk from COVID-19; an outline of the COVID-19 response plan; identification of points of contact from the employer and the workers; and any other sector specific advice that is relevant.
* Created a daily cleaning protocol to ensure that the workplace is kept as virus-free as possible
* Provided adequate hygiene facilities in each of the school washrooms including access to:
* Wipes
* Paper tissues (for hand drying)
* Sanitisers
* Hand soap
* Identified a designated isolation area in the event of a suspected case of COVID-19. The designated area and the route to the designated area is easily accessible. Should more than one person display signs of infection additional isolation areas have been allocated. The designated area has the ability to isolate the person behind a closed door. This designated area will be be ventilated and supplied with tissues, hand sanitiser, wipes, gloves, masks and clinical waste bags.

**Starting school/work**

* Before returning to school each student and member of staff will complete a **Pre-Return to Work Form** . This form seeks confirmation that the student or member of staff, to the best of their knowledge, has no symptoms of COVID-19 and also confirms that they are not self-isolating or awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test. If the answer is Yes to any of the questions on the form they are strongly advised to follow the medical advice they receive or seek medical advice before returning to work/school
* Arrival/departure times and hence class times may be staggered if numbers of students increase so as to avoid students congregating outside in the car park or long queues at reception.
* On return to school all staff and students will:
* Temperature test themselves every day on arrival.
* Fill out the contact log in reception. They will be asked to list everyone they have been in contact with during the past two weeks in order to facilitate contact tracing should anyone develop symptoms.
* bring their own pens, paper, coffee mug, knife and fork (if having lunch upstairs)
* :
* the name of the representative allocated to address any worker concerns and communicate the messages about good hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and physical distancing,
* the latest up to-date advice and guidance on public health:
* what a student/staff member should do if they develop symptoms of COVID-19;
* details of how the workplace is organised to address the risk from COVID-19;
* an outline of the COVID-19 response plan; identification of points of contact from the employer and the workers;
* any other sector specific advice that is relevant.

**Hand Hygiene**

Regular hand washing with soap and water is effective for the removal of COVID-19.

**KSOE has** ensured that appropriate hygiene facilities, supplies (hand sanitisers, hand wipes etc..) and training are in place to accommodate staff and students adhering to these hand hygiene measures. Posters on effective handwashing are displayed in every washroom and the kitchenette upstairs.

Staff and students should

* wash their hands with soap and water or with an alcohol-based hand rub regularly and in particular
* after coughing and sneezing,
* before and after eating,
* before and after preparing food,
* if in contact with someone who is displaying any COVID-19 symptoms,
* before and after being in a car/minibus shared by others
* before and after being in a crowd,
* when arriving and leaving the school,
* before having a cigarette or vaping,
* when hands are dirty,
* after toilet use.
* Avoid touching their eyes, mouth or nose
* Use tissue to dry hands rather than towels and throw this directly in the bins provided after use
* Bring in their own cups, bottles, knife and fork etc… to ensure that no objects are shared that touch one’s mouth
* use own pens for signing in
* pay through contactless credit card where possible.

**Respiratory Hygiene**

In addition to hand hygiene, good respiratory hygiene and etiquette is also necessary. If coughing or sneezing students/staff should cover their mouth with the crook of their arm if masks are not available.

* + KSOE has provided tissues in every classroom as well as bins/bags for their disposal.
  + As part of the cleaning protocol bins will be emptied at regular intervals. o
  + Face masks will and/or visors will be made available to the teachers/students in line with Public Health advice.

**Note**: wearing of masks is not a substitute for other measures outlined above. However, if masks are worn they should be clean and they should not be shared or handled by other colleagues. Employers and workers should keep up to date with the latest Public Health advice issued in regard to masks by Gov.ie/NPHET

**Physical Distancing**

**Physical distancing** is recommended to reduce the spread of infection. The current recommended distance to be maintained between people to minimise risk of transmission is 2 metres.

**KSOE** will provide for physical distancing across all work activities and this will be achieved in a number of ways:

* A no hugging /hand shaking policy will be enforced
* Staff and students will be organised into teams (class groups) who take breaks together. The teams should be small (5 people maximum)
* the breaks will be staggered at 15 minute intervals i.e. one from 11:15 -11:30 the next from 11:35 to 11: 50
* furniture will be reorganised so that tables and chairs are placed far enough apart in classrooms and the lounge areas.
* a queue management system will be implemented in the reception area with correct distance markings,
* a one-way system will be instituted with students and staff entering on first floor and leaving on 2nd floor. This will avoid any bottlenecks in the reception area.
* physical barriers, such as clear plastic sneeze guards will be installed between office staff and students/ teachers in the reception area and if necessary in the classrooms depending on student numbers and classroom location.

**Dealing with a suspected case of Covid 19**

While a student or staff member should not attend work if displaying any symptoms of COVID-19, the following steps outline how KSOE will deal with a suspected case that may arise during school hours:

The manager appointed for dealing with suspected cases will:

* isolate the student/member of staff and accompany the individual to the designated isolation area via the isolation route, keeping at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic person at all times.
* provide a mask for the person presenting with symptoms. The person should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises.
* assess whether the unwell individual can immediately be directed to go home and call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home.
* facilitate the person presenting with symptoms remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and facilitate them calling their doctor. The student/staff member should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects.
* Advice should be given to the person presenting with symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bag provided.
* arrange transport home or to hospital for medical assessment where possible. Public transport of any kind should not be used.
* carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery.
* arrange for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.
* provide advice and assistance if contacted by the HSE.

Additional advice on dealing with a suspected case is available from the NSAI:

[https://www.nsai.ie/images/uploads/general/NSAI-Guidelines-for-COVID-19-2020-04-09.pdf](about:blank)

**At Risk/Vulnerable Employees/Students:**

If an at risk or vulnerable student or employee cannot work from home and must be in the school, KSOE will make sure that they are preferentially supported to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres. If there is any opportunity for them to work/study from home this will be facilitated.

**Transportation**

As the use of the minibuses by multiple students is not encouraged, the number of students who share a vehicle – simultaneously or consecutively – should be kept to a minimum as far is as reasonably practicable.

* Students and staff will be encouraged to travel alone if using personal cars or at a maximum be accompanied by one passenger who shall be seated in adherence with physical distancing guidance.
* If no car is available students should walk or cycle to the school.

**Cleaning**

Cleaning of work areas will be priority for KSOE and will be conducted at regular intervals in accordance with the advice

[https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/Environmental-persistence-of-SARS\_CoV\_2-virus-Options-for-cleaning2020-03-26\_0.pdf](about:blank)

KSOE will implement thorough and regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces. If disinfection of an area is required it will be performed in addition to cleaning, never as a substitute for cleaning. As part of this protocol:

* contact/touch surfaces such as table tops, work equipment, door handles and handrails are visibly clean at all times and will be cleaned at least twice daily.
* washrooms and communal facilities such as the lounge will be cleaned once daily or when visibly dirty
* Teachers will be provided with essential cleaning materials to keep their own workspaces clean (for example wipes/disinfection products, paper towels and waste bins/bags).
* Bins will be emptied at the end of each day.

**First Aid**

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

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

[https://www.phecit.ie/PHECC/Publications\_and\_Resources/Newsletters/Newsletter\_Items/2020/PHECC\_COVID\_19\_Advisory\_v1.aspx](about:blank)

**Mental Health and Wellbeing**

Staff or students, when they return to school, may have gone through traumatic events such as the serious illness or death of a relative or friend, or be experiencing financial difficulties or problems with their personal relationships. In addition, those who are returning to the school after a period of isolation are likely to have concerns about the risk of infection or changes to their job due to the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

KSOE will:

* provide their staff /students with information on publicly available sources of support and advice and information about the prevention and control measures taken in the workplace to reduce the risk of infection.
* ensure workers are made aware of and have access to any business provided Employee Assistance Programmes or Occupational Health service.

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

[https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Topics/Workplace\_Stress/](about:blank)

The Authority also provides a free online risk assessment tool for addressing work related stress: WorkPositive ([www.workpositive.ie](about:blank) ).

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

[https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/together/?referrer=/together/](about:blank)