

COVID-19 Response Plan for the Safe and Sustainable Reopening of Tullow Community School



August 2020

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide clear and helpful guidance for the safe reopening of Tullow Community School 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.

2. COVID-19 Response Plan

A COVID-19 Response Plan is designed to support the staff and Board of Management of Tullow Community School in putting measures in place that aim to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the school environment.

This COVID-19 Response Plan details the policies and practices necessary for our school to meet the Government's '*Return to Work Safely Protocol*' i.e. the Department of Education's plan for school reopening that will aim to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in the school environment.

This 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 the education partners as appropriate for post primary schools.

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

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

Tullow Community School

Tullow, Co. Carlow. Roll No: 91356F



1. COVID-19 Policy Statement

Tullow Community School 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
- 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 hand-washing techniques
- agree with staff, a worker representative who is easily identifiable to carry out the role outlined in this plan in relation to summer provision
- inform all staff and students of essential hygiene and respiratory etiquette and physical distancing requirements
- adapt the school to facilitate physical distancing as appropriate in line with the public health guidance and direction of the Department of Education
- keep a contact log to help with contact tracing
- ensure staff and students engage with the induction / familiarisation briefing provided by the Department of Education
- implement the agreed procedures to be followed in the event of someone showing symptoms of COVID-19 while at school
- provide instructions for staff and students to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during school time
- implement cleaning in line with Department of Education advice

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

Signed

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: /8/2020.

Signed **Mr. Paul Thornton**

4. Planning and Preparing for Return to School

Before reopening our school for the 2020/21 school year, processes have been implemented to include the following:

- All changes have been made in keeping with Government plans and public health advice;
- Two Lead Worker representatives have been appointed (*details at Section 4.3*);
- Covid-19 posters and other signage will be on display around the school to prevent introduction and spread of COVID-19 (*details at Section 4.4*);
- Necessary changes to the school layout will be implemented to support the redesign of classrooms to support physical distancing (*details at Section 4.5 and 12*);
- All classrooms will be cleaned and sanitised;
- A Covid-19 health and safety risk assessment has been updated (*details at Section 4.6*);
- School access has been restricted and a contact tracing log is maintained on a daily basis (*details at 4.7 and Appendix 3*)
- The school buildings have been reviewed to check the following:
 - The water system;
 - Ventilation;
 - All essential services.

4.1 Induction Training

All staff will complete COVID-19 Induction Training prior to students returning to the school building. The training will deal with the following:

- Latest up to-date advice and guidance on public health;
- COVID-19 symptoms;
- What to do if a staff member or pupil develops symptoms of COVID-19 while at school;
- Understanding of the COVID-19 Response Plan.

4.2 Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)

All Staff must complete a **Return to Work (RTW) form** and return it to the Principal **3 days** before returning to work (see **attached Appendix 1**). Details of the **Induction Training** for completion by staff will follow on return of the above form to facilitate the staff member's return to the school facility.

Some school staff in the 'very high risk' group may be unable to return to school.

See Circular CL 0049/20 Coronavirus (COVID-19): Arrangements for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants employed in recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools.

4.3 Lead Worker Representative

Two Lead Worker Representatives (LWRs) will be appointed from the teaching and non-teaching staff.

In summary, the role of the LWR is to:

- Represent all staff in the workplace;
- Keep up to date with the latest COVID-19 public health advice;
- Work collaboratively with school management;
- Consult with school management on the control measures required;
- Promote good hygiene practices;
- Assist school management with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace;
- Monitor adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19;
- Carry out regular reviews of safety measures;
- Report any issues of concern immediately to school management;
- Consult with the school management on the school's COVID-19 Response Plan;
- Assess the handling of any COVID-19 incident with school management;
- Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace and make representations to school management on their behalf.

Names of Lead Worker Representatives:
Michelle Cullen
Siobhan Kelly

4.4 Signage

Appropriate signage produced by the Department of Education will be displayed in prominent areas around the school. **Posters will display age appropriate key health messages – hand washing, sneeze and cough etiquette and the wearing of face masks.**

4.5 Changes to School Layout

Some changes to the school layout have been carried out as follows:

- All classrooms have been reconfigured to maintain social distancing of 1 metre between students and 2 metres between teacher and students;
- All classrooms will be equipped with single desks;
- The staff room has been redesigned to maintain a social distance of 2 metres between staff members;
- There will be a one way system on the corridors;
- The canteen facility will have a queuing system;
- Student lockers may be used but a mixed allocation system is in place in order to reduce social gathering;
- A staggered break system will be in place for small and lunch break;

- Some large classes have been decreased in size for the duration of the Covid 19 measures which will lead to considerable changes in class groups and teachers from last year.

4.6. Health and Safety Risk Assessment

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment. A risk assessment to identify the control measures required to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 in Tullow Community School is attached at **Appendix 2**.

4.7 Access to School and Contact Log

Arrangement for necessary visitors such as contractors and parents will be **restricted to essential purposes and limited to those who have obtained prior approval from the principal**. Parents therefore can no longer ‘drop off’ lunches, P.E. gear and bags etc. to school reception during the school day in the interest of public health for all.

A detailed sign in/sign out log of those entering the school facilities is in operation (see **attached Appendix 3**).

5. Control Measures - To prevent Introduction and Spread of COVID-19 in the School

It is the responsibility of the school community to do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into the school.

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. Parents, students and visitors have an equal obligation to comply with the measures in place.

How to Minimise the Risk of Introduction of COVID-19 into schools:

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

- Staff and students are advised that if they have symptoms not to attend school, to phone their doctor and to follow HSE guidance on self-isolation;
- Staff and students are advised not to attend school if they have been identified by the HSE as a contact for a person with COVID-19 and to follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement;
- Staff and students are advised that if they develop symptoms at school to bring this to the attention of the principal (or deputy principal if the principal is unavailable) promptly;
- There is a protocol for managing a suspected case of COVID-19 in the school (*see Section 8*);
- Everyone entering the school building must perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser;

- Visitors to the school during the day should enter following prior arrangement with the principal and follow procedures;
- Physical distancing of 2 metres must 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

All members of the school community should follow good respiratory hygiene.

5.3 Hand Hygiene

- Hand hygiene can be achieved by hand washing or use of a hand sanitiser (when hands look clean):
- Use of hand hygiene facilities will be managed so as to avoid congregation of people waiting to use wash hand basins and hand sanitisers;
- Hand sanitiser dispensers will be available more readily at exit and entry points of schools and classrooms;
- Wash hand basins, running water, liquid soap and hand drying facilities will be provided in all toilets, kitchens and any food preparation areas;
- Hand washing facilities will be maintained in good condition and supplies of soap and towels will be topped up regularly to encourage everyone to use them;
- Posters displaying hand washing techniques and promoting hand washing will be displayed;
- Evidence of effectiveness is best for alcohol based hand rubs but non-alcohol based hand rubs will be employed in Science labs and Home Economics rooms.

Frequency of Hand Hygiene

Students and staff should perform hand hygiene:

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

Funding has been provided by the Department of Education to source hand-sanitisers and other necessary PPE supplies for use in the school.

5.4 Physical Distancing

Where possible staff should maintain a minimum of 1 m distance from students and where possible 2m. 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

The following measures are in place to increase separation:

- Classrooms have been reconfigured with single desks to maintain a distance of 1 metre between students and 2 metres from teachers;
- Live streaming of classes where possible with some junior and senior cycle classes may be required depending on classroom size;
- Student locker configuration has been changed;
- Canteen configuration has been changed;
- Staffroom configuration has been changed;

Decreasing interaction

- Students will follow a one-way system and move quickly. Physical distancing will also be encouraged;
- Students will use separate entrance and exit routes;
- Break and lunch times will be staggered for senior and junior students
- Social physical contact (hand to hand greetings, hugs) will be discouraged;
- Student movement within the classroom will be minimised as much as possible;
- Staff and students will avoid sharing of personal items;
- Contact surfaces of shared devices and equipment will be cleaned regularly and hand hygiene encouraged.

Physical Distancing outside of the classroom and within the school

School drop off/collection

- From 8.00am-8.40am, students go to school canteen
- All students will go to their base classes at 8.50am for class assembly and occupy an assigned seat socially distanced from others.

Staff

- A distance of 2m is recommended for physical distancing by staff;

- Teachers are responsible for cleaning and sanitising their desk and clearing of all belongings for the cleaning of the staffroom at the end of the day;
- Face covering will be worn by all staff;
- Staff meetings may be held remotely or in large spaces to facilitate physical distancing.

Canteen

- Physical distancing will be applied in canteen facilities and in the gym during break times;
- Break times will be staggered;
- A queue management system will be in operation for the canteen facilities;
- Students will sanitise their hands before and after entering the canteen/gym.

Corridors and Stairwells

Physical contact and informal group discussions will be avoided on corridors and stairways.

5.5 Use of PPE in the school

- Teachers, staff and students will wear a face mask/visor at all times. Students or staff who have difficulty wearing a cloth mask may wear a visor;
- Correct use of face coverings will be explained during induction training;
- Face coverings should be stored in a sealed labelled zip lock bag and washed every day using soap and hot water.

Gloves

- Gloves may be necessary for 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. Impact of COVID-19 on Certain School Activities

Choir/Music/Art/Electronics/Sport equipment

- Students should use their own equipment for all the above activities;
- Shared equipment must be cleaned after use and hand hygiene practices observed.

Sport Activities

- Schools should refer to the HPSC guidance on Return to Sport.
<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/07253-return-to-sport-protocols/>

All sporting and extra curricular activities are postponed until further notice apart from internal school activities such as P.E.

7. Hygiene and Cleaning in Tullow Community School

- The Department of Education has provided additional funding for the enhanced cleaning required to minimise the risks of Covid-19;
- The specific advice in relation to school cleaning will be covered in the induction training;
- The school will be cleaned at **least once per day**. Students and teachers will be supplied with cleaning products and will be required to clean down their own work areas and equipment. Additional cleaning will be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, hand rails, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities;
- Waste disposal bags from offices and other areas within the school facility will be disposed of regularly;
- Shower facilities shall not be available for use by staff or pupils;
- Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.). Staff should sanitise their hands before using any equipment in kitchen e.g. microwave etc.

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

- The room will be cleaned as soon as practicably possible;
- Once the room is vacated the room will not be reused until it has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected;
- If a pupil or staff member diagnosed with COVID-19 spent time in a communal area like a canteen/gym or if they used the toilet or bathroom facilities, then the areas will be cleaned with household detergent followed by a disinfectant (as outlined in the HPSC interim health advice) as soon as is practically possible.

8. Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19

Staff or pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of COVID-19.

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

- A designated area will be identified as a main isolation area. This is the former staff workroom beside the Deputy Principal's office in the canteen. Additional cases will be isolated in the Committee Room.
- If the person with the suspected case is a student, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted immediately;
- The student will be isolated in the isolation room keeping 2 metres apart from teacher/staff member;
- Staff member and student will wear a face covering/mask;

- Students will remain in the isolation room under supervision until collected by parent/guardian;
- If a student is too unwell to go home or advice is required, staff member will contact 999 or 112;
- An assessment of the incident will be completed and the isolation area will be cleaned and disinfected.

The HSE will inform any staff/parents who have come into close contact with a diagnosed case via the contact tracing process. The HSE will contact all relevant persons where a diagnosis of COVID-19 is made. The instructions of the HSE will be followed and staff and pupil confidentiality is essential at all times.

9. 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 co-operation and assistance of all staff is essential to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 and to protect health and safety as far as possible within the school. All staff have a key role to play. In this regard and in order to facilitate a safe return to work, these duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Adhere to the School COVID-19 Response Plan and the control measures outlined;
- Complete the RTW form at least 3 days before return to work;
- Must inform the principal if there are any other circumstances relating to COVID19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to facilitate their safe return to the workplace;
- Must complete COVID-19 Induction Training and any other training required prior to their return to school;
- Must be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices;
- Coordinate and work with their colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained;
- Make themselves aware of the symptoms of COVID-19 and monitor their own wellbeing;
- Self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any symptoms of COVID-19;
- Not return to or attend school if they have symptoms of COVID-19 under any circumstances;
- If they develop any symptoms of COVID-19 whilst within the school facility, they should adhere to the procedure outlined above;
- Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.

10. 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. Please see circular 0049/2020 for further details.

11. Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

The Department recognises the need for school staff wellbeing and collective self-care. Support for school staff wellbeing will be provided by Department Support Services including the PDST and CSL, as well as by the HSE's Health Promotion Team. An [Occupational Health Strategy](#) is in place as a supportive resource for staff in schools. 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*'.

Supports include a comprehensive communications campaign, delivering universal messages of safety and wellbeing to all:

- **Webpage (gov.ie/backtoschool)** with access to all information relating to the reopening of schools, including information about wellbeing, with links to specific resources, guidance and support
- **Wellbeing Webinars for primary/special/post-primary schools** - supporting wellbeing as schools reopen
- **Wellbeing Toolkits for Teachers** with a range of easily downloadable, user-friendly materials

Access to a range of support/resources and professional learning opportunities from Teacher Education Support Services including **Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST), Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT), Centre for School Leadership (CSL) and National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT)**

- Extra guidance to support student wellbeing recognising the particular importance for this support in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic challenges;
- e-mental health services, including on-line counselling, provided by the HSE/HSE-funded service providers including *spunout.ie, Jigsaw, MyMind, Childline and Turn2Me*

12. Programme for the Return to School (27/08- 04/09)

Thursday 27/08	Friday 28/08	Monday 31/08	Tuesday 01/09	Wednesday 02/09	Thursday 03/09	Friday 04/09	Monday 07/09	Tuesday 08/09
Staff Meeting	Staff Meeting	1st Yrs only	1st Yrs only.	1st Yrs and 6th Yrs	1st/6th/3rd Yrs.	1st/3rd/5th//6^h Years	All years apart from TY.	All Years

- Teachers will have base classrooms where possible and students will move from class to class as normal;
- Masks/Visors will be worn in class and on the corridors by teachers and students. Teachers will oversee the wearing of masks by all students;
- Teachers will supervise the use of hand sanitiser by students on entering and leaving each classroom;
- Teachers will oversee the sanitation of desks, backs of chairs and equipment by all students at the end of class. This may not have to be completed at the end of every class (depending on the effectiveness of the sanitiser used in school);
- Teachers will manage the ventilation of the classroom during and after class where possible;
- Some students may be asked at the start of each class to attend a supervised area if the classroom is unable to accommodate the full class group. During this time, students may need to continue to engage with their class via blended learning or complete other work assigned by their teacher.
- Junior Cycle students will sit close to students from their base class in practical/optional subject classes where possible;
- Students are allowed download ebooks for use in class and keep their use of lockers to a minimum. Students should get their books before classes in the morning and at lunchtime only during the day;
- Students may wear their PE gear instead of their uniform on **the day they have P.E scheduled on their timetable.**

This is a live working document and will be subject to change as we continue to move through the roadmap of reopening our school.

Appendix 1



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 School: Tullow Community School
Name of Principal: Mr. Paul Thornton
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 school 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
Tullow Community School
Tullow, Co. Carlow. Roll No: 91356F
Contact Tracing Log

Name of School	Tullow Community School		School Contact Person	Mr. Paul Thornton Principal
Address of School	Tullow, Co Carlow		For Queries only: Phone No	0599151473
			Email	info@tullowcs.ie
Name of Visitor				Was the visit pre-arranged with the Principal? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Date of Visit	___/___/____	Time	Entry to school _____ am <input type="checkbox"/> pm <input type="checkbox"/>	Exit from School _____ am <input type="checkbox"/> pm <input type="checkbox"/>
Visitor Status	Contractor <input type="checkbox"/>	Parent/Guardian <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/> Please complete: _____	
Contact details of visitor	Company Name (if applicable)			
	Address			
	Contact No.		Email Address	
	Reason for Visit			
Who the visitor met (separate line required for each person the visitor met)				
Name of Person visited				Length of time spent with each person in the school

Appendix 4

Checklist for dealing with a suspected case of COVID-19 in Tullow Community School

Staff members will be required to manage a suspected case in line with the protocol and training.

Mr. Paul Thornton Principal will be responsible for ensuring that all aspects of the protocol to deal with suspected cases have been adhered to.

Isolation Area

- The workroom beside the Deputy Principal's office in the canteen will be used as an isolation area.
- If there is more than one suspected case of COVID-19 additional spaces will be available in the Committee Room.
- The following will be available in the isolation areas:
 - Tissues
 - Hand sanitiser
 - Disinfectant/wipes
 - Gloves/Masks
 - Waste Bags
 - Bins

Isolating a Person

- The suspected infected person will be accompanied to the isolation area, along the isolation route with physical distancing maintained;
- Staff/students will maintain a distance of at least 2m from the suspect case at all times (*it is intended that this will be dealt with as part of the Department's online training*);
- Additional disposable masks will be available for the suspected affected person while in the common area and when exiting the building.

Arranging for the suspected affected person to leave the school

- Staff – if the staff member feels well enough they will travel home;
- Student – Parents/guardians will be contacted without delay to collect the student. Under no circumstances can the student use public or school transport to travel home if they are a suspected case of COVID-19;
- The suspect case will be advised to avoid touching other people, surfaces and objects;
- They will 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;
- They will be advised to attend their GP.

Follow up

- An assessment of the incident to identify any follow-up actions will be carried out;
- Assistance and advice will be provided to the HSE if required.

Cleaning

- The isolation area will be out-of-use until cleaned and disinfected;
- Arrangements will be made to clean and disinfect any classroom space where the staff member or pupil was located;
- The isolation area(s) will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected as soon as the suspected infected person leaves.