



Covid-19 School Response Plan

Introductory statement and rationale

This Covid-19 Response Plan is designed to support the staff and Board of Management (BOM) in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of Covid-19 in KTETNS. This plan details the policies and practices necessary for our school to meet the Government's 'Return to Work Safely Protocol', the Department of Education and Skills plan for school reopening and to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in the school environment. The plan incorporates current advice about measures to reduce the spread of Covid-19 in the community issued by the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHET). It will be kept under constant review as further information and guidance is made available.

The response plan will support the sustainable reopening of our school where the overriding objective is to protect the health of staff and pupils while promoting the educational and development needs of the children in the school.

In line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol, the key to a safe and continued return to work, and re-opening of our schools requires strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between the Board of management, staff, pupils and parents.

This document aims to provide details of:

1. COVID-19 School Policy
2. Planning and Preparing for Return to School
3. Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representative
4. Safety Statement and Risk Assessment
5. General advice to prevent the spread of the virus
6. Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)
7. Control Measures
8. Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19
9. Staff Duties
10. Covid related absence management
11. Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

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

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



1. KTETNS COVID-19 Policy

This COVID-19 policy outlines our commitment as a school to implement the plan and help prevent the spread of the virus. The policy was drafted in July 2020 by the Covid Lead Worker Representative in collaboration with the Principal and the BOM. This document will be circulated to all staff, parents and pupils in advance of the reopening of the school in August 2020. Any amendments to the policy thereafter will be communicated to all members of the school community. This policy will be available on the school website.

COVID 19 Policy Statement

KTETNS is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our staff and a safe learning environment for all our pupils. To ensure that, we have developed the following COVID 19 Response Plan. The 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 pupils on the Public Health advice issued by the HSE and Gov.ie
- display information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and correct hand-washing techniques
- agree with staff, a worker representative who is easily identifiable to carry out the role outlined in this plan
- inform all staff and pupils of essential hygiene and respiratory etiquette and physical distancing requirements
- adapt the school to facilitate physical distancing as appropriate in line with the guidance and direction of the Department of Education and Skills
- keep a contact log to help with contact tracing
- ensure staff and pupils engage with the induction / familiarisation briefing provided by the Department of Education and Skills
- implement the agreed procedures to be followed in the event of someone showing symptoms of COVID-19 while at school
- provide instructions for staff and pupils to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during school time
- implement cleaning in line with Department of Education and Skills advice



All school staff will be consulted on an ongoing basis and feedback is encouraged on any concerns, issues or suggestions. An email account has been set up for confidential communication between all stakeholders. The address is covid19@ktet.ie.

This can be done through the Lead Worker Representative: **Christine Cuddy**.

The Deputy Lead Worker will be **Lisa Brannock**.

2. Planning and Preparing for Return to School

The Board of Management aims to facilitate the resumption of school-based teaching and learning and the return to the workplace of staff. This must be done safely and in strict adherence to the advice and instructions of public health authorities and the Government. This plan outlines the details for reopening the school facility and the applicable controls.

School Buildings

Before reopening schools in the new school year, we will check the following:

- Does the water system need flushing at outlets following low usage to prevent Legionella disease?
- Has school equipment and mechanical ventilation been checked for signs of deterioration or damage before being used again?
- Have bin collections and other essential services resumed?

Signage

Schools will be required to display signage outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene. We will display posters in prominent areas such as offices, corridors, the staffroom, classrooms and toilets. Signage will be kept up to date in line with any changes to public health advice.

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 in the format of a Google form.

The RTW form should only be completed at least 3 days prior to any proposed date of return to the workplace.

Note: Induction Training for staff will be developed by the Department in consultation with stakeholders and made available for all schools and staff.

3. Return to work safely and Lead Worker Representative



Responsibility for the development and implementation of the Covid-19 Response Plan and the associated control measures lies primarily with the Board of Management and the School Leadership.

The Return to Work Safely protocol provides for an agreed procedure between management and staff to appoint a Lead Worker Representative to carry out a specific role.

The role of the worker representative is to ensure that Covid-19 measures are adhered to in the workplace as follows:

- Work collaboratively with the employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19.
- Promote good hygiene practices such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette along with maintaining social distancing in accordance with public health advice.
- Assist 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.
- Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.
- Make representations 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 and control measures or the adherence to such control measures by staff, parents/guardians, contractors or visitors, he/she should contact the lead worker who will engage with the Principal/BOM. In the absence of the LWR, the deputy LWR should be contacted.

A designated email covid19@ktet.ie has been set up for any queries.

Name of Lead Worker representative: Christine Cuddy (christine.cuddy@ktet.ie)

Name of Deputy Lead Worker representative: Lisa Brannock (lisa.brannock@ktet.ie)

All staff, parents/guardians, 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.

4. Safety Statement and Risk Assessment

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment. A risk assessment to identify the control measures required to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 in school settings is attached at Appendix 1.



It is important that schools review their emergency procedures involving, fire safety, first aid, accidents and dangerous occurrences to consider any new risks that arise due to the school's COVID-19 Response Plan. The policies that have been amended in light of the risks or any procedural changes associated with COVID-19 are:

- Accident, Injury and Administration of Medicines
- Fire Safety Policy
- Health and Safety Statement
- Hire and Use Policy
- Homework Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Physical Contact and Crisis Management Policy
- Visitor Code of Conduct Policy.

All changes within these policies are highlighted in **yellow**.

5. General advice to prevent the spread of the virus

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

The best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in a school is to minimise the risk of introduction of the disease into the school setting in the first place.

This can be achieved through the following measures:

- Promote awareness of COVID-19 and its symptoms amongst staff, pupils, parents and visitors.
- Advise staff and parents of pupils who have symptoms of COVID-19 or other acute infectious diseases not to attend school, to phone their GP and follow the HSE guidance on self-isolation.
- Advise staff and parents of pupils who have been identified by the HSE as contact of a person with COVID19 not to attend schools and to follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement.
- Ensure that staff and pupils know what to do if they develop symptoms at school.



- Everyone entering the school building should be required to perform hand hygiene with hand sanitiser.
- Visitors to school during the day should be by prior arrangement and should be received at a specific contact point (through the office only). All visitors will be required to complete the Contact Tracing log by scanning the QR code on the main door.
- Staff, pupils and visitors should at all times adhere to the up to date advice and instructions of the public health authorities in relation to protecting oneself and others against the risk posed by the Covid-19 virus.

Updated advice from the HSE is available on its website – <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>

KTETNS will arrange for any update to advice from the HSE or DES to be circulated to staff, pupils and visitors in a timely manner.

The most up to date information can be found here:

www.gov.ie/backtoschool

Managing the risk of spread of COVID-19

1. Wash your hands frequently

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

Follow the HSE guidelines on handwashing:

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

2. Hand Hygiene and Hand Sanitisers

Hand hygiene can also be achieved by the use of hand sanitisers (when hands are clean).

Hand sanitisers are more readily deployed in school settings to avoid disruption to teaching and learning and to avoid congestion of staff and pupils waiting to use hand washing facilities.

They will be available at entry and exit points, in each classroom, staffroom and other high traffic locations around the school building.

3. Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth



Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth.

4. Physical distancing

Physical distancing is recommended to reduce the spread of infection in the workplace. To best reduce any risk of infection, visitors to the school must be strictly by appointment only. We ask parents to avoid unnecessary physical contact and use email/phone methods of communication as far as possible.

Pupils from Junior Infants to 2nd class are not required to socially distance. Children will sit in pods of no more than 4-6 pupils and these pods should be spaced at least 1m apart where possible. The teacher's desk should be placed 2m away from pupil's desks where possible. There should be minimal movement around the classroom, where possible and children should play with those in their class bubble to reduce the contact across class groupings.

Pupils from 3rd to 6th class should be seated 1m apart where possible, or in small pods of 4-6 children, with 1m distance between each pod. Each class will be referred to as a bubble and contact between bubbles should be minimised. Children will play with their own class groupings e.g. 3rd class play together and do not interact with 4th class. This is vital to reduce risk of contact and transmission of the virus.

These guidelines will be kept under constant review as new information becomes available from HSE and DES.

5. Practice 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.

By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and Covid19.

Good hygiene practices and washing your hands properly and regularly can help stop the spread of the virus. It is, therefore, crucial that all staff adhere to this advice and adopt the following practices as strictly as possible.

Do:	Do Not
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wash your hands properly and often ● Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough and sneeze ● Put used tissues into a bin and wash your hands ● Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean ● Share objects that touch your mouth – for example, bottles, cups, cutlery, etc.
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People at very high risk (extremely vulnerable):

Current public health guidelines have identified groups who are defined as being at very high risk.

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

- are over 70 years of age - even if you're 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
- severe respiratory conditions including cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, pulmonary fibrosis, lung fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and severe COPD
- have a condition that means you 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. Staff who are in this group should self-declare on the Return to Work form if they believe that they are at very high risk. Please see section 8 for further details.

6. Control Measures



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, pupils, parents/guardians and visitors as far as possible within the school.

These control measures are outlined in this document.

The control measures shall continue to be reviewed and updated as required on an ongoing basis. It is critical that staff, pupils, parents/guardians and visitors are aware of, and adhere to, the control measures outlined and that they fully cooperate with all health and safety requirements.

Staff, in particular, 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.

The following control measures have been put in place:

i. Return to Work Form

Staff will be required to complete a RTW form at least 3 days prior to any return to the school facility (see section 2 above). The purpose of the RTW form is to get confirmation from staff that, to the best of his/her knowledge, he/she has no symptoms of Covid-19 and is not self-isolating or cocooning or awaiting the results of a Covid-19 test. The Google form will be sent to all staff prior to their return to work and should be requested from the principal upon return to work from any absence of more than 3 days from the workplace for any reason.

ii. Induction Training

All staff will undertake and complete Covid-19 Induction Training prior to returning to the school building. Induction training is available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/dd7fb-induction-training-for-reopening-schools/>

The aim of such training is to ensure that staff have full knowledge and understanding of the following:

- Latest up to-date advice and guidance on public health
- Covid-19 symptoms
- What to do if a staff member or pupil develops symptoms of Covid-19 while at school
- Outline of the Covid-19 response plan



Staff will be kept fully informed of the control measures in place in the school and their duties and responsibilities in preventing the spread of Covid-19 and 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 or LWR.

iii. Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

It is crucial that all staff, pupils, parents/guardians, contractors and visitors are familiar with, and adopt, good hand and respiratory hygiene practices.

Guidance documentation and Information posters will be available at various locations within the school facility.

Information posters will be prominently displayed at appropriate locations within the school facility including offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilet areas. Such are intended to inform but also remind everyone about the importance of hygiene in preventing the spread of Covid-19 virus and protecting health and safety.

Handwashing facilities and/or hand sanitisers will be available at multiple locations within the school facility and should be available in each classroom. Children will be reminded throughout the day to wash their hands and time will be dedicated to handwashing prior to eating.

iv. Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Most recent guidance recommends that all staff should wear a face covering where a distance of 2m cannot be maintained. It is envisaged that a 2m distance will not be possible in the classroom setting, therefore we recommend that all adults wear face coverings during the school day, where a social distance of 2m cannot be maintained. Staff will be provided with an option of face shield or masks, or may wear both if they wish. Current health guidance does not recommend children under the age of 13 wear face coverings.

The use of disposable gloves in the school setting by pupils or staff is not appropriate. It 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.

v. Cleaning



Arrangements for more regular and thorough cleaning of areas and surfaces within the school have been made. Regular and thorough cleaning of communal areas and frequently touched surfaces shall be conducted, in particular, toilets, lifts, door handles and kitchens. Cleaning will be performed regularly and whenever facilities or surfaces are visibly dirty.

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 collections of used waste disposal bags from offices and other areas within the school facility.

Shower facilities shall not be available for use by staff or pupils 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.).

[vi. Access to the school building/contact log](#)

Arrangement for necessary visitors such as contractors and parents/guardians will be restricted to essential purposes and limited to those who have obtained prior approval from the Principal. All parents/guardians are required to phone the school office prior to entering the school premises and only enter if their visit has been deemed essential by the principal/administrator.

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. All visitors to the school will be required to scan a QR code in the foyer, this will take them to an online form that will obtain all information required for contact tracing. All staff and pupils will be required to confirm their contact details should they be required for contact tracing at the start of each school term.

Parents are requested to make all payments to the school via online banking/through the Aladdin app. To reduce the risk of exposure, cash can no longer be accepted in the office.

[vii. First Aid/emergency procedure](#)



The standard First Aid/Emergency procedure shall continue to apply in KTETNS. Please see our Accident, Injury and Administration of Medication Policy for further detail.

7. Dealing with a suspected case of Covid-19

Staff or pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid-19. The following outlines how KTETNS will deal with a suspected case that may arise during the course of work.

A designated isolation area should be identified within the school building. The possibility of having more than one person displaying signs of Covid-19 should be considered and a contingency plan for dealing with additional cases put in place. The designated isolation area should be behind a closed door and away from other staff and pupils. In our school, the isolation area is in the isolated hallway beside the main hall servery. This area is well ventilated, is directly accessible to an external exit and has sufficient space for 3 people to safely isolate 2m apart from each other. If the isolation area is required, it will be fully cleaned and sterilised following its use. Appropriate PPE will be available in the isolation area, including disposable face coverings, tissues and designated bins for their disposal.

If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of Covid-19 while at work in KTETNS the following are the procedures to be implemented:

- If the person with the suspected case is a pupil, the parents/guardians should be contacted immediately
- Isolate the person and have a procedure in place to accompany the individual to the designated isolation area via the isolation route, keeping at least 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 if age appropriate. The person should wear the mask if in a common area with other people until they have exited the building.
- Assess whether the individual who is displaying symptoms can immediately be directed to go home/be brought home by parents and advise them to call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home
- Facilitate the person presenting with symptoms remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and facilitate them calling their doctor. The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects.
- Advice should be given to the person presenting with symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bag provided

- If the person is well enough to go home, arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible and advise them to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used
- If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a Covid-19 suspect.
- Carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery
- Arrange for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved

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

Parents will be reminded at the start of each term to ensure that the school has the most up to date contact details for any designated people for collection. All pupils should be collected within 20 minutes if they present with symptoms of Covid-19.

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. In order to facilitate a safe return to work, these duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- i. Adhere to the School Covid-19 Response Plan and the control measures outlined. The cooperation and assistance of all staff is essential to reduce the risk of spread of Covid-19 and to protect health and safety as far as possible within the school. All staff have a key role to play.
- ii. Coordinate and work with their colleagues to ensure that physical distancing is maintained.
- iii. Make themselves aware of the symptoms of Covid-19 and monitor their own wellbeing.
- iv. Self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any symptoms of Covid-19.
- v. Not return or attend school if they have symptoms of Covid-19 under any circumstances.
- vi. If they develop any symptoms of Covid-19 whilst within the school facility, they should adhere to the procedure outlined above.



vii. Complete the RTW form before they return to work.

viii. 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.

ix. Must complete Covid-19 Induction Training and any other training required prior to their return to school. Training is available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/dd7fb-induction-training-for-reopening-schools/>

x. Must be aware of, and adhere to, good hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices.

xi. Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with all guidance

9. Covid-19 related absence management

The management of a Covid-19 related absence will be managed in line with agreed procedures with DES. All relevant details can be found in circular 0051/2020 available here: <https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/>

This circular outlines information for all employees who are symptomatic, asymptomatic, advised to restrict movement or in the very high-risk category.

10. Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

The Board of Management aims to protect and support the health and wellbeing of all staff both at work, whether in the school facility or at home and outside of work. The Board of Management is mindful that the support and promotion of staff health and wellbeing is particularly important in the current context where the Covid-19 pandemic has caused considerable challenges for, and disruption to, people's personal, family and social lives as well as their work arrangements.

The Board of Management aims to foster a culture and work environment that support healthy behaviours and staff wellbeing and shall continue to make health and wellbeing tools and guidance available to staff as well as organising suitable support programmes, initiatives and events.

All staff will be guided towards the Spectrum Life platform where a range of wellbeing programmes and information can be found. They will be guided to create their own account to log on to the platform at: <https://wellbeingtogether.spectrum.life/>



These are challenging times for everyone. Should a staff member experience any stress or anxiety in respect of work or work arrangements, he/she should feel free to speak to the principal. Relevant supports will be outlined periodically throughout the school year, particularly the availability of the Employee Assistance Service on 1800 411 057.

Policy Ratification and Review

Date Created	July 2020
Date of Review	August 2020
Date of Next Review	October 2020