The Department of Business Enterprise and Employment (DBEI) issued the ***Return to Work Safely Protocol COVID-19***

***Specific National Protocol for Employers and Workers*** which set outs how an organisation should safely return to the workplace during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the Department of Education and Skills (DES) issued the ***COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of post primary schools*** and the ***Roadmap for the full return to school*** which sets outs how schools will reopen for all students from the end of August.

COVID-19 is a risk that will continue to be part of our working life for some time. Community and Comprehensive Schools (Schools) must incorporate these new arrangements into their workplaces’ health and safety management systems. The State Claims Agency (SCA) in collaboration with the Association of Community and Comprehensive

Schools (ACCS) has developed a COVID-19 biological agents risk assessment for Schools to be included with existing

risk assessments.

# Scope

The purpose of this risk advisory notice (RAN) is to assist Schools in completing a biological agents risk assessment to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 infection in Schools.

There is a common law and statutory duty on Schools to complete an appropriate biological agents risk assessment where the nature of the work poses an occupational exposure health risk to COVID-19. This requirement is set out in the ***Return to Work Safely Protocol*** and is supported by the guiding templates developed by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA). By completing this risk assessment, Schools can also help prevent the spread of COVID-19, protect their employees and students from being infected and prevent the possibility of claims arising in the future.

# How to use the risk assessment template

It is expected that all Schools are applying advices set out in the national guidelines and that appropriate risk control measures are being actively implemented. These control measures must be documented in a biological agent risk assessment.

The biological agents risk assessment for COVID-19 (Appendix A) sets out the typical risks / hazards which may arise in Schools from COVID-19. It is a nonexhaustive list and is not likely to cover all scenarios, therefore, it is provided in editable format to allow Schools to consider site-specific factors and incorporate these into their existing risk assessments and amend as appropriate.



**GIS RISK ADVISORY NOTICE 17: RISK ASSESSMENT FOR COVID-19 (C&C Schools)**

To complete Appendix A, Schools should:

1. Review the recommended controls as listed under “Controls / Action” and for each location:
   * Remove the control measures which do not apply and/or;
   * Reconfigure the control measures to reflect actions which have been implemented within your School;
2. Include “Site-specific controls” that have been applied within your School;
3. Record the “Date Completed” and “Completed By” sections to track and close all control measures;
4. Communicate control measures to employees and others as appropriate;
5. Include a copy of the completed risk assessment as an insert within your safety statement documentation;
6. Review and update in line with COVID-19 advices and retain all documentation on file.

**How often should the biological agents risk assessment be reviewed?**

Given the volatile nature of COVID-19, risk assessments will require regular review and should be updated based on current best practice on infection prevention and control as advised by public health.

Schools should also review other relevant occupational health and safety risk assessments to take account of any changes that may arise to activities following the implementation of public health recommendations.

*This risk advisory notice has been produced solely for use by DSAs that come within the remit of the State Claims Agency, as established by the National Treasury Management Agency (Amendment) Act, 2000. The State Claims Agency does not bear responsibility for use of the guidance or reliance on it in any manner by any other third party.*

## SCA-RA-17-01

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| Appendix A - COVID-19 Risk Assessment – **Part 1. General Requirements** | | | | | |
| **Hazard / Risk** | **Hazard / Risk**  **Present?** | **Controls / Actions** | **Control Complete** | **Date Completed** | **Completed By** |
| **Risk of transmission of infection from inadequate physical distancing** | Yes at times | * Staff and in particular those who are in a very high risk category are aware of the provisions outlined in Circular Letters 0049/2020 and 0054/2020 and requirements outlined in both have been implemented; * Number of service providers, contractors visitors allowed in the school is restricted; * Staff off-site visits to external locations are avoided, where possible. Guidance is provided to those who conduct site visits in third-party locations; * Physical distancing measures have been implemented in line with the Department of Education and Skills guidelines; * Where physical distancing cannot be ensured alternative protective measures are in place; * For information on student work experience, external visits and external learning activities please refer to the [latest guidance](https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7acad-reopening-our-post-primary-schools/) issued by the Department of Education and Skills; * Students who are at “very high risk” of COVID- 19 as indicated by relevant public health guidelines have been identified and additional supports provided; * Increase supervision of students before and after school, at break times, in the canteen, at locker areas and toilet facilities to encourage physical distancing. | Yes  Yes  Yes  Yes  Students are asked to wear masks  Home Tuition application submitted.  Teachers currently organising work.  2 additional supervisors hired. | August 2020  August 2020  August 2020  Ongoing  Ongoing  Ongoing throughout the year.  Ongoing | Principal  Principal  Principal/Programme Coordinators  Management and Staff  Management and Staff  Management and student’s teachers.  Management and staff. |
| **Inadequate supply of hygiene controls** | **No** | * Sufficient hand washing and hand sanitising facilities have been provided in convenient locations that can be easily and frequently accessed. Stations, as appropriate, are available for anyone involved in outdoor activities and / or personal hand sanitisers are provided; * A monitoring system is in place to ensure that stations are regularly checked and replenished; * Tissues for coughing and sneezing are available throughout the school. | Yes, 70 sanitising dispensers were mounted throughout the school.  Yes  Yes – Blue roll | August 2020  On-going  On-going | Principal, Covid Aide, Caretakers.  Caretakers,  Staff.  Caretakers |
| **Inadequate supply of PPE** | **No** | * Adequate supplies of suitable PPE for required tasks are provided; * Additional PPE (enclosed eye protection and FFP2 mask, if available) is provided and must be worn by First Aid Responders when responding to all first aid incidents where close contact cannot be avoided. A mask is available to give a person if she/he is displaying symptoms consistent with COVID-19 to limit droplet dispersion; * Staff have been provided with any necessary PPE to perform cleaning / disinfection tasks; * Staff are informed that prior to donning PPE, and on their removal, they should wash / sanitise their hands thoroughly; * Arrangements are in place for the monitoring, cleaning, inspection, maintenance and disposal of PPE, where appropriate; * Where the use of PPE is required, staff and students have been informed in the correct fitting, use, removal, cleaning, storing and disposal of PPE. | Yes  Yes  Yes  Yes  Yes  Yes | On-going  On-going  On-going  On-going  On-going  On-going | Caretakers  Secretary, Care takers, Supervisors  Principal, Secretary |

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|  |  | • | Schools should consider having additional disposable face coverings available for students, and staff in case a back-up face covering is needed during the day. | Yes, spares in main office. | On-going | Secretary |
| **Inadequate level of**  **communication**  **to all relevant individuals** | **No** | •  •  • | All staff who are returning to the workplace are provided with a [training programme w](https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/dd7fb-induction-training-for-reopening-schools/)hich includes information as outlined in the HSA Employer Checklist Number 3: induction / familiarisation;  Staff complete the online COVID-19 return to work form.  Parents have been provided information on the school’s safety measures and new arrangements; | Yes  Yes  Yes | August 2020  August 2020  August 2020 | All Staff  All Staff  Principal |
|  |  | • | Safety measures and new arrangements should be explained and illustrated to students to ensure that they are familiar with the operation and layout of the school and the new health and safety measures and routines. | Yes | When students returned to school in Sept | Principal and Year Heads |
|  |  | • | Posters, notices and signs are displayed in prominent places outlining:   * the signs and symptoms of COVID-19; * the procedure to follow if they or a colleague develops symptoms of COVID-19 while in the School/ location; * control measures which should be followed – social distancing, hand and respiratory hygiene, and minimising contact; * hand washing instructions. | Yes | August 2020 | Covid Aide |
|  |  | • | A lead worker representative has been appointed and provided with the necessary information to complete their role; | Yes | August 2020 | Principal |
|  |  | • | Agreed lines of communication are implemented with the lead worker representative, including how staff raise any concerns, report any incidents and feedback on controls measures while also providing them with relevant up-to-date information e.g. changing control measures, national advices etc.;  A system is implemented to keep up-to-date with updated national and international guidelines. | Yes, dedicated email address | On-going | All staff |
| **Site-specific Controls:** | | |  | | | |
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COVID-19 Risk Assessment - **Part 2. Surfaces & Cleaning**

## **Hazard / Hazard / Risk Risk Controls / Actions**

**Control Date Completed**

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| Appendix B- Examples  Please see below a non-exhaustive list of examples for a number of control measures which are outlined above | |
| **Part 1.** | **General Requirements** |
| **Risk of transmission of infection from inadequate social and physical distancing** | * Consider the following for restricting/reducing the number of individuals (service providers/contractors, visitors) in the workplace/location): * Contactless delivery options such as designated drop-off times and location e.g. box at door for post; * Where possible virtual meetings should be facilitated, even between colleagues physically located within the building; Essential face-to-face meetings (with, colleagues, service users etc.) should be restricted and limited in length; * Use of technological alternatives e.g. emailing electronic forms instead of posting; * Restricting number of visitors and / or restricting access to certain indoor locations; * Staggered start times / shifts to reduce the numbers present and congestion at entrance points; * Complete virtual training, where possible. * The following additional physical distancing examples could be considered: * It is recommended that staff and students attending secondary schools wear a face-covering when a physical distance of 2 meters from other staff or students cannot be maintained; * Where essential face-to-face meetings are required, the meeting space should be set up to accommodate physical distancing e.g. indicating capacity, floor markings to indicate sitting arrangements; * Implement a queue management system with correct distance markings e.g. lifts, entrance/exits, canteens; * Provide one-way systems for access / egress routes, corridors, walkways; * Use of floor markings as reminders to maintain social distance e.g. in lifts, posters / signposts located on outside pathways; * Ceasing all self-service activities and providing food that is pre-wrapped; * Stagger canteen use and extend serving times where possible to align with class groupings/staff members who work together; * Additional supervision arrangements in line with Circular Letter 0053/2020; * Consider accessing available spaces in the local community if practicable. |
| **Inadequate supply of hygiene controls** | • Entry /exits, close to classrooms, receptions, canteens, restrooms, lifts, photocopiers, are examples of high traffic / communal areas where hand sanitising facilities could be located. |
| **Part 2.** | **Surface & Cleaning** |
| **Risk of transmission of infection from frequently touched surfaces** | * Examples of surfaces which are frequency touched include tables, chairs, lockers, lifts buttons, photocopiers, printers, tabs, toilets, remotes controls / TV switches, electronics, kettles, coffee machine, fridge doors, door handles, light switches, tools, inside vehicles etc; * In order to reduce the number of surfaces which individuals could touch provide pedal / no-touch bins, leaving internal doors open, removing unnecessary items (spare chairs, storage boxes, etc) from work areas, contactless photocopiers / printers, allocate individual workspaces/equipment, prewrapped food items etc. |
| **Risk of transmission of infection from surfaces due to lack of cleaning** | * Consider providing wipes / disinfection products, paper towels and waste bins / bags to keep workspaces clean; * Consider use of covers which can be wiped for electronics; * Refer to SCA/ACCS COVID-19 Cleaning Guidance and Sample Checklists for schools for a sample cleaning schedule; * Each setting should be cleaned at least once per day. If there is access to additional cleaning support during school hours this should be focused on frequently touched objects and surfaces e.g., door handles, hand rails, chairs/arm rests, communal eating areas, sinks and toilet facilities. |
| **Risk of transmission of infection from traveling to and from school & events etc.** | • Please contact the SCA stateclaims@ntma.ie for advices if your School owns a transport vehicle; • Please refer to the section on Arrangements to Get Children Safely to our Schools within the Department of Education and Skills Reopening Our Schools – The Roadmap for the Full Return to School for further information |

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| Appendix C - Source/Reference Material | | |
| **Topic** | **Title** | **Author/Source** |
| All | [Return to Work Safely Protocol, COVID - 19 Specific National Protocol for Employers and Workers](https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/22829a-return-to-work-safely-protocol/) | Government of Ireland |
| Schools | [Roadmap for the full return to school](https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/b264b-roadmap-for-the-full-return-to-school/) | Department of Education and  Skills |
| Schools | [Interim recommendations for the reopening of schools and educational facilities](https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/532b6-health-advice-provided-by-the-health-protection-surveillance-centre-hpsc-for-the-safe-reopening-of-schools-and-educational-facilities/) | Health Protection Surveillance  Centre  Health Service Executive |
| All | [Government of Ireland](https://www.gov.ie/en/) | Government of Ireland |
| All | [Health Service Executive](https://www.hse.ie/eng/) | Health Service Executive |
| All | [Health Protection Surveillance Centre](https://www.hpsc.ie/) | [Health Protection Surveillance](https://www.hpsc.ie/)  [Centre](https://www.hpsc.ie/)  Health Service Executive |
| All | [Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation](https://dbei.gov.ie/en) | Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation |
| All | [Health and Safety Authority](http://www.hsa.ie/) | Health and Safety Authority |
| Schools | [Department of Education and Skills](https://www.education.ie/en/https:/www.education.ie/en/) | Department of Education and  Skills |
| Schools | [Framework to maintain Physical Distancing in the Classroom in Post Primary Schools](https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7acad-reopening-our-post-primary-schools/) | Department of Education and  Skills |
| Schools | [Returning to school: Guidance on learning and school programmes for post primary school leaders and teachers](https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7acad-reopening-our-post-primary-schools/) | Department of Education and  Skills |
| Schools | [Circular letter 0049/2020](https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0049_2020.pdf) | Department of Education and  Skills |
| Schools | [Circular letter 0053/2020](https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0053_2020.pdf) | Department of Education and  Skills |
| Schools | [Circular letter 0054/2020](https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0054_2019.pdf) | Department of Education and  Skills |
| Schools | [COVID-19: Interim Guidance for the use of face-coverings in childcare and educational settings](https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/532b6-health-advice-provided-by-the-health-protection-surveillance-centre-hpsc-for-the-safe-reopening-of-schools-and-educational-facilities/) | Health Protection Surveillance  Centre  Health Service Executive |
| Schools | [COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of Post Primary Schools](https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7acad-reopening-our-post-primary-schools/) | Department of Education and  Skills |
| All | [COVID-19 - Advice for Employers and Employees](https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid-19/covid-19_advice_for_employers_and_employees/covid_19_%E2%80%93_advice_for_employers_and_employees.html) | Health and Safety Authority |
| All | [COVID-19 - Return to Work Safely Templates and Checklists](https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid-19/return_to_work_safely_templates_and_checklists/return_to_work_safely_templates_and_checklists.html) | Health and Safety Authority |
| All | [HSE at risk groups](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/people-at-higher-risk.html) | Health Service Executive |
| All | [Checklist 1: Planning and Preparing](https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid-19/return_to_work_safely_templates_checklists_and_posters/employers_checklist_no11.pdf) | Health and Safety Authority |
| All | [Checklist 2: Control Measures to Prevent Infection](https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid-19/return_to_work_safely_templates_checklists_and_posters/employers_checklist_no2_control_measure1.pdf) | Health and Safety Authority |
| All | [Checklist 3: COVID-19 Induction](https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid-19/return_to_work_safely_templates_checklists_and_posters/employers_checklist_no3_induction1.pdf) | Health and Safety Authority |
| All | [Checklist 4: Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVD-19](https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid-19/return_to_work_safely_templates_checklists_and_posters/employers-checklist-no-41.pdf) | Health and Safety Authority |
| All | [Checklist 5: Cleaning and Disinfection](https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid-19/return_to_work_safely_templates_checklists_and_posters/employers_checklist_no5_cleaning-and-disinfection1.pdf) | Health and Safety Authority |
| All | [Checklist 6: Workers](https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid-19/return_to_work_safely_templates_checklists_and_posters/employee_checklist_no-61.pdf) | Health and Safety Authority |
| All | [Checklist 7: Worker Representative(s) Checklist](https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid-19/return_to_work_safely_templates_checklists_and_posters/worker_representative_checklist_no_71.pdf) | Health and Safety Authority |
| All | [Role of Lead Worker Representative(s) poster](https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid-19/return_to_work_safely_templates_checklists_and_posters/lead_worker_representative_poster_a3_.pdf) | Health and Safety Authority |
| All | [National Interim Guidelines for Public Health management of contacts of cases of COVID-19](https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/guidance/contacttracingguidance/National%20Interim%20Guidance%20for%20contact%20tracing.pdf) | [Health Protection Surveillance](https://www.hpsc.ie/)  [Centre](https://www.hpsc.ie/)  Health Service Executive |
| All | [Coronavirus (COVID-19) posters and resources](https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/) | Health Service Executive |
| All | [Minding your mental health during the coronavirus pandemic](https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/mental-health/covid-19/minding-your-mental-health-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak.html) | Health Service Executive |
| All | [Work Positive CI](https://www.workpositive.ie/) | State Claims Agency /  Health and Safety Authority / CISM Network Ireland |
| All | [GIS Risk Advisory Notice 15: Covid-19 Building Reoccupation Risk](https://stateclaims.ie/uploads/publications/COVID-19-RAN-Buildings-Reoccupation-Final.pdf) | State Claims Agency |

[|](http://www.stateclaims.ie/)

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|  | [Assessment](https://stateclaims.ie/uploads/publications/COVID-19-RAN-Buildings-Reoccupation-Final.pdf) |  |
| All | [Risk Advisory Notice: COVID-19 (Coronavirus)\*](https://stateclaims.ie/uploads/publications/State-Claims-Agency-Risk-Advisory-Notice-COVID-19-April-2020_200406_111130.pdf) | State Claims Agency |
| All | [Indemnity Advices: COVID-19 (Coronavirus)](https://stateclaims.ie/uploads/publications/State-Claims-Agency-Indemnity-Advices-COVID-19-Coronavirus_April-2020.pdf) | State Claims Agency |
| All | [Reporting adverse events or incidents to SCA](https://stateclaims.ie/contact-us/reporting-events-or-incidents) | State Claims Agency |
| All | [GIS Risk Advisory Notice 12: A Guide to Portable Appliance Testing (PAT)](https://stateclaims.ie/uploads/publications/SCA-RA-12-01-A-Guide-To-Portable-Appliance-Testing.pdf) | State Claims Agency |
| All | Inspection and Testing of Equipment and Machinery - Regulatory Requirements | State Claims Agency |
| All | [GIS Risk Advisory Notice 15: Covid-19 Building Reoccupation Risk Assessment](https://stateclaims.ie/uploads/publications/COVID-19-RAN-Buildings-Reoccupation-Final.pdfhttps:/stateclaims.ie/uploads/publications/COVID-19-RAN-Buildings-Reoccupation-Final.pdf) | State Claims Agency |
| First aid | [PHECC COVID-19 Advisory v1](https://www.phecit.ie/PHECC/Publications_and_Resources/Newsletters/Newsletter_Items/2020/PHECC_COVID_19_Advisory_v1.aspx) | Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC) |
| Cleaning | [Disinfection of environments in healthcare and non-healthcare settings potentially contaminated with SARS-CoV-2](https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/Environmental-persistence-of-SARS_CoV_2-virus-Options-for-cleaning2020-03-26_0.pdf) | European Centre for disease control |
| Equipment/to  ols & visitors | [Construction Sector C-19 Pandemic Standard Operating Procedures](https://cif.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/CIF-Covid-19-Operating-Procedure-Report.pdf) | Construction Industry Federation |
| Business Continuity | [**COVID-19** Workplace Protection and Improvement Guide](https://www.nsai.ie/images/uploads/general/NSAI-Guidelines-COVID-19-20200619.pdf) | National Standards Authority of Ireland |

[|](http://www.stateclaims.ie/)