



St. Louis Community School

COVID-19

Response Plan

2021-2022

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1) Introduction:

St. Louis Community School is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our students and staff. The safety and wellbeing for each member of our school community is the priority for our Board of Management and school management team.

The purpose of this document is to provide clear and helpful guidance for the safe operation of post primary schools through the prevention, early detection and control of COVID-19. It provides key messages to minimise the risk of COVID-19 for staff, students, families and the wider community while recognising the importance of education for the health and wellbeing of students and society as a whole.

This document focuses on the practical steps which can be taken in post primary schools to minimise the risk of infection while recognising that no interpersonal activity is without risk of transmission of infection at any time. The documentation and templates in this booklet are supported by the public health advice provided by the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) for the safe reopening of schools and educational facilities.

1.1) Rationale for our Response Plan:

The Minister for Education published “The Roadmap for the Full Return to School” on the 27th July. It sets out what the operation of schools will look like and the range of supports which will be available in a COVID-19 context. The management of St. Louis Community School followed the Roadmap when planning the re-opening.

The Roadmap was developed in line with public health advice issued by the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) and in compliance with the “Return to Work Safely Protocols” developed by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and the Department of Health with guidance documents provided by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA).

St. Louis Community School has a COVID-19 Response Plan which was ratified by the Board of Management on the 21st August 2020. In addition to being places of learning, schools are also places of work. This document sets out the information that post primary schools need to implement a School COVID-19 Response Plan, including a COVID-19 policy, lead worker representative/s (LWR) and a process to deal with a suspected case of COVID-19.

1.2) COVID-19 Response Plan

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

The COVID-19 Response Plan details the policies and practices necessary for a school to meet the Government’s ‘Return to Work Safely Protocol’, the Department of Education plan for school reopening that will aim to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in the school environment.

The resumption of school based teaching and learning and the reopening of St. Louis Community School complies with the public health advice and guidance documents prepared by the Department. Doing so minimises the risk to students, staff and others. The response plan supports the sustainable reopening of school where the overriding objective is to protect the health of staff and students while promoting the educational and development needs of the children in the school. The COVID-19 response plan is a living document and will be updated in line with the public health advice and any other relevant agreement with education partners as appropriate for 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 St. Louis Community School Board of Management, staff, students and parents.

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

2) School COVID-19 Policy

A COVID-19 policy outlines the commitment of the school to implement the plan and help prevent the spread of the virus. The policy was signed and dated by the Chairperson of St. Louis Community School Board of Management and will be brought to the attention of the staff, students, parents and staff upon the return to school on or after August 28th 2020.

See **Appendix 1** for a copy of our Covid-19 Policy.

3) Planning and Preparing for Return to School

St. Louis Community School aims to facilitate the resumption of school based teaching and learning and the return to the workplace of staff. The return to the workplace must be done safely and in strict adherence to the public health advice and any guidance issued by the Department of Education.

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

3.1) Covid-19 Protocols

Before reopening St. Louis Community School for the 2020/21 school year we ensured that a number of protocols were in place to include the following:

- Means of keeping up to date with public health advice, changes to any Government plans for the safe reopening of society and Department of Education updates through the Covid tracker app, the HSE app and the RTE News app.
- Health information will be passed on in a timely manner to staff, students, parents and others via the school email, text or app system.
- Ensured that staff have reviewed the training materials provided by the Department of Education, this will take place at the staff meeting on August 28th.
- Provided staff with access to the Return to Work (RTW) form, the form was posted to all staff on August 14th 2020
- Identified a Lead Worker representative, all staff were offered the opportunity of Lead Worker Representative. Four teachers were interested in this position. A staff election was organised and the following people were elected. Ms. Suzi Ottewell, has a two hour allowance per week, Mr. Tony Duffy and Mr. Gavan Gallagher both have a one hour allowance per week.
- Posters and other signage to prevent introduction and spread of COVID-19 have been mounted on every floor of the school, on classroom doors, on window sills, on the Covid specific notice boards, on the toilet walls and general purpose areas.

3.2) Physical Environment

A lot of changes were made to the school layout to support the redesign of classrooms to support physical distancing. The one metre social distancing rule has been implemented in all the general purpose classrooms. All classroom floors were marked to aid social distancing. The practical classrooms have been reconfigured to also accommodate the 1 metre social distancing rule. In computer rooms the room capacity has been reduced and some of the the rooms have been reconfigured to accommodate the social distancing rule.

- We have removed a lot of unnecessary clutter to facilitate the ongoing cleaning of the school, we have also taken into account the importance of having educational materials to create a stimulating learning environment;
- Updated the health and safety risk assessment, this will be an ongoing process.

- Made necessary arrangements to restrict access to the school by informing parents that they may only come into the school by prior appointment. We are maintaining records of contacts to the school via the Contact Tracing log.
- Reviewed the school buildings to check the following:
 - The water system has been flushed at outlets following low usage to prevent Legionella disease;
 - School equipment and mechanical ventilation have been checked for signs of deterioration or damage before being used again;
 - Bin collections, cleaning services and other essential services have resumed.

3.3) Induction Training

All staff were asked to undertake and complete COVID-19 Induction Training prior to returning to the school building. The aim of such training was 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 will be updated with any changes to the control measures or guidance available from the public health authorities.

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

3.4) Procedure for Returning to Work (RTW)

In order to return to the workplace, staff must complete a **Return to Work (RTW)** form, which is available electronically or from the principal.

Staff were asked to complete and return the RTW form 3 days before returning to work, all staff returned the forms. Copies of staff RTWs are held by the Principal.

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

All staff have been surveyed to establish if any staff members are in the very high risk category and are unable to return to work. Two staff members were classified by Medmark in the very high risk category in September/October 2021. A further staff member was classified in February

2022. The arrangements that apply for these staff are in accordance with the appropriate circular issued to all schools by the Department of Education and Skills. [Refer to 'Arrangements for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants employed in recognised Primary and Post Primary schools' Circular: 0049/2020.]

3.5) *Lead Worker Representative*

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

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

Responsibility for the development and implementation of the COVID-19 Response Plan and the associated control measures lies with the Board of Management of St. Louis Community School and school management.

Strong communication and a shared collaborative approach is key to protecting against the spread of COVID-19 in schools, and looking after the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and students. Adherence to the Return to Work Protocol will only be achieved if everyone has a shared obligation in implementing the measures contained within the Protocol in their place of work.

If a staff member has any concerns or observations in relation to the COVID-19 Response Plan, control measures or the adherence to such measures by staff, students or others, they should contact the LWR who will engage with school management.

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

In summary, the role of the LWR is to:

- Represent all staff in the workplace regardless of role, and be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of different staff cohorts;
- Keep up to date with the latest COVID-19 public health advice;
- Work collaboratively with school management to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19;
- Consult with school management on the control measures required to minimise the risk of staff and students being exposed to COVID-19;
- Promote good hygiene practices, in conjunction with school management, such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette along with maintaining social distancing in accordance with public health advice;

- Assist school management with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace in line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol and current public health advice;
- Monitor, in conjunction with school management, adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19;
- Conduct reviews of safety measures that are in place to address and suppress COVID-19 in the workplace. Reviews (including an examination of the workplace) should be conducted on a regular basis (at least twice per week);
- Report any issues of concern immediately to school management and keep records of such issues and actions taken to rectify them;
- Consult with the school management on the school's COVID-19 Response Plan in the event of someone developing COVID-19 while in school including the location of an isolation area and a safe route to that area;
- Following any incident, assess with the school management any follow up action that is required;
- Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace;
- Make representations to school management on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.

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

Names of Lead Worker Representatives:	Contact details:
Ms. Suzi Ottewell	suzi.ottewell@stlouiscs.com
Mr. Tony Duffy	tony.duffy@stlouiscs.com
Mr. Gavan Gallagher	gavan.gallagher@stlouiscs.com

The Lead workers also have a dedicated email address; keepingsafe@stlouiscs.com

Staff are invited to email their concerns to this email address and then the LWRs bring the issues to the Principal.

All staff, students, parents, 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.

See Appendix 3 for more details on the role of the Lead Worker.

3.6) Signage

In St. Louis, we have displayed lots of HSE signage outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and posters of good hand and respiratory hygiene. As the Department were late to arrive, we

printed and laminated our own. All posters have been mounted in prominent areas such as offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilets.

3.7) *Making Changes to School Layout*

Maintaining physical distancing in the school environment is recommended as one of the key control measures to minimize the risk of the introduction and spread of COVID-19. So far we have reconfigured the classrooms and other areas to support physical distancing in line with the guidance in advance of school reopening. The floors have all been marked with special non slip tape to ensure tables are not moved any closer than 1 metre.

3.8) *Health and Safety Risk Assessment*

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment. We have drafted a risk assessment to identify the control measures required to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 in school settings.

We have reviewed our 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. Any changes to the schools existing emergency procedures will be documented and incorporated into the school's safety statement.

3.9) *First Aid/emergency procedure*

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

3.10) *Access to School and Contact Log*

Access to the school building will be in line with the following procedures:

- External visitors will be kept to a minimum.
- The school front door by the main reception will remain locked at all times.
- Parents have been advised to contact the school by phone before attending the school to sign in/out students.
- Advice on the Covid-19 measure will be visible to ensure that visitors are also adhering to what is required.
- Sanitising stations are in position at all school entry points.
- Signage is in place externally advising delivery personnel to contact reception by phone before attempting to enter the building.

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. The Department of Education Inspectorate may also need to visit schools and centres for education to support them as appropriate in the implementation of public health advice relating to creating a safe learning and working environment for all.

The prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a crucial step in restricting the spread of the virus and protecting the health and safety of the individuals themselves and other staff, contractors and visitors at the workplace.

4) Control Measures - To prevent Introduction and Spread of COVID-19 in Schools

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

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

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

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

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

Promote awareness of COVID-19 symptoms (**details at Section 4.1**);

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

- Physical distancing of 2 metres should be maintained between staff and visitors where possible.

4.1) *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

4.2) *Respiratory Hygiene*

Good respiratory hygiene is emphasised and encouraged regularly. Staff and students are asked to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue or bent elbow when coughing or sneezing and dispose of the used tissue immediately and safely into a nearby bin.

4.3) *Hand Hygiene*

Staff and students should understand why hand hygiene is important as well as when and how to wash their hands. St. Louis promotes good hygiene and displays posters throughout the schools on how to wash your hands. All teachers were asked to show students the HSE guidelines on handwashing:

- Hand hygiene can be achieved by hand washing or use of a hand sanitiser (when hands look clean).
- Use of hand hygiene facilities including wash hand basins have been managed so as to avoid congregation of people waiting to use wash hand basins and hand sanitisers.
- Hand sanitiser dispensers have been mounted at all exit and entry points of the school, in all classrooms and care will be taken to clean up any hand sanitizer spills to prevent risks of falls.
- Wash hand basins, running water, liquid soap and hand drying facilities are provided in all toilets, kitchens and food preparation areas.
- Hand washing facilities will be maintained in good condition and supplies of soap and paper towels will be topped up regularly to encourage everyone to use them.
- Hot air dryers are an acceptable alternative for hand drying and they are regularly maintained. There is no evidence that hand dryers are associated with increased risk of transmission of COVID-19.
- Laminated posters displaying hand washing techniques and promoting hand washing have been placed on walls adjacent to washing facilities.
- Hand sanitiser is suitable for use for hand hygiene when hands are not visibly soiled (look clean).

- Evidence of effectiveness is best for alcohol based hand rubs and these are being used in all the sanitizing units throughout the school.
- When hand rubs/gels are being used in school care should be taken to ensure that students do not ingest them as they are flammable and toxic.

Frequency of Hand Hygiene

Students and staff should perform hand hygiene:

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

4.4) Physical Distancing in the classroom

Physical distancing is recommended to reduce the spread of infection. Physical Distancing is applied in a practical way to recognise that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on this issue. The management of St. Louis recognise that care should be taken to avoid generating tension or potential conflict and some flexibility in the implementation of measures may be required at time.

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

However where possible staff should maintain a minimum of 1m distance 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

In order to increase separation among our student population we have:

1. Reconfigured class spaces to maximise physical distancing of one metre.
2. Utilising and reconfiguring all available space in the school in order to maximise physical distancing;
3. Reviewed Timetables and where possible students base classrooms have been introduced for some year groups.
4. Reconfiguring Classes where numbers are an issue.

5. We are currently considering the use of Live Streaming for some classes where we are unable to accommodate all of the class in the one classroom or students who are unable to attend school due to underlying health conditions.

In order to increase separation among staff members, we have organised four different staff rooms. All seating in staffrooms have been adequately spaced out and taped accordingly.

Decreasing interaction

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

In post primary schools physical distancing of 2m where possible or at least 1m should be maintained between desks or between individual students or staff.

- As far as possible and practical, students would remain in the classroom and teachers would move between rooms.
- As far as possible and practical students would be assigned to a main class cohort which would remain in the classroom for most subjects, with teachers moving between rooms.
- Where possible and practical double classes should be planned to minimise movement during the day.
- Where students have an elective subject they would move quickly into the new class and would be seated with members of their class cohort, observing as much physical distance as possible.
- Hand washing and/or sanitising would be required when moving between classes by teachers and students.
- Physical distancing between the teacher and class would be observed.
- Where movement of class groups between rooms is required it should be planned to minimise interaction with other class groups.
- Limit interaction on arrival and departure and in hallways and other shared areas.
- Social physical contact (hand to hand greetings, hugs) should be discouraged.
- Where students need to move about within the classroom to perform activities (access to a shared resource) it should be organized to the greatest degree possible to minimise congregation at the shared resource.
- Staff and students should avoid sharing of personal items.
- Where teaching and learning involves use of keyboards or tablets, the contact surface of the device should be cleaned regularly and hand hygiene encouraged.

4.5) Physical Distancing outside of the classroom and within the school

School drop off/collection

Physical distancing of 2m, where possible, should be implemented when dropping students to school.

Students have been encouraged to walk or cycle to school. A new bike stand had been developed.

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

Staggered drop off/pick up times were not possible.

At the start of each day, students are encouraged to go directly to their designated learning space/classroom.

Staff

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

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

Staff meetings for all staff are held remotely, other meetings are held in small groups in large rooms to facilitate physical distancing.

There is a no hand shaking policy in school.

Gatherings of staff at the beginning or end of the school day is minimised.

Canteen

Ensure physical distancing is applied in canteen facilities

A queue management system will be operated in the school canteen and students will be required to social distance.

Students will be reminded to clean their hands before and after entering the canteen area. No more than 4 students are permitted to sit at a table together in the canteen. There is adequate space in the Louis Bautain room and outside the student entrance on the picnic tables for students to eat their lunch.

Lunch time has been reduced from 40 minutes to 30 minutes, this allows less time for congregating at the busiest time of the school day.

Corridors and Stairwells

Briefly passing someone in a hall is very unlikely to contribute significantly to the spread of infection if people do not have physical contact and avoid informal group discussions. Nevertheless due to the large volume of students in our school, we have implemented a one way system on our corridors. Arrows and One Way System stickers have been placed on all corridor floors.

4.6) Use of PPE in Schools

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

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

Appropriate PPE will be available for dealing with suspected COVID-19 cases, intimate care needs and for first aid. Where staff provide healthcare to children with medical needs in the school environment they should apply standard precautions as per usual practice.

The PPE will be stored in the main office and staff will be required to sign for all PPE. All staff members are being provided with a mask and a visor.

Masks

Students will be required to wear face coverings from when they enter the school grounds.

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

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

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

Medical grade masks have been provided for all SNAs and staff who wish to use them.

The school has additional disposable face masks available for students and staff in case a back-up face mask is needed during the day.

Gloves

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

Routine use of disposable gloves is not a substitute for hand hygiene. Gloves are available from the main office.

5) Impact of COVID-19 on certain school activities

The Department will work with stakeholders to provide more detailed advice on school activities in advance of school reopening.

Choir/Music Performance

Choir practices/performances and music practices/performances will take place in the Chapel only as this is a very large room. Sharing of instruments is not permitted with the exception of the piano which will be sanitised after use. The room is well-ventilated and the distance between performers will be maintained.

Sport Activities

Changing rooms are unavailable to students. Contact sports are not permitted. Students will be required to sanitise all equipment after use / between uses by different people.

Shared Equipment

Art – Where possible students will be encouraged to have their own individual art and equipment supplies.

Electronics – Shared electronic devices such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards should be cleaned between use and consideration could be given to the use of wipeable covers for electronics to facilitate cleaning.

Musical Equipment/Instruments – To the greatest extent possible, instruments should not be shared between students and if sharing is required, the instruments should be

Library Policy – Where practical students should have their own books. Textbooks that are shared should be covered in a wipeable plastic covering that can be wiped with a suitable household cleaning agent between uses. Students should be encouraged to perform hand hygiene after using any shared item.

6) Hygiene and Cleaning in Schools

The specific advice in relation to school cleaning is set out in the HPSC advice. This advice sets out the cleaning regime required to support schools to prevent COVID-19 infections and the enhanced cleaning required in the event of a suspected cases of COVID-19. The staff and management of St. Louis are aware of this advice and apply it to all areas of the school as appropriate.

- Staff and students are reminded to take particular care of the hygiene arrangements for wash hand and toilet facilities.
- At the start and end of each class, students must sanitise their chair and desk using the blue roll and sanitising spray provided in every classroom. Staff must similarly sanitise the teacher's desk and chair.
- In specialist rooms, students must sanitise all tools, equipment etc. before and after use.
- Two additional cleaners have been employed since September. Their cleaning regime focuses on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, hand rails, chairs/arm rests, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities.
- The school has engaged a professional contract cleaner to clean the school each evening.
- There will be regular collection 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 students due to the increased risk associated with communal shower facilities and areas. This shall be reviewed in line with government guidance.

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

- The rooms should be cleaned as soon as practicable possible.
- Once the room is vacated the room should not be reused until it has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry.
- Disinfection only works on things that are clean. Therefore when disinfection is required it is always in addition to cleaning.
- Person/s assigned to cleaning should avoid touching their face while they are cleaning and household gloves and a plastic apron.
- Clean the environment and furniture using disposable cleaning cloths and a household detergent followed by disinfection with a chlorine based product (household bleach).
- Pay special attention to frequently touched surfaces, the back of chairs, couches, door handles and any surfaces that are visibly soiled with body fluids.
- Once the room has been cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry, the room can be reused.

7) Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19

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

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 students.

If a staff member/student displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school the following are the procedures to be implemented:

- If the person with the suspected case is a student, 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;
- The isolation area does not have to be a room but if it is not a room it should be 2m away from others in the room;
- Remember that the virus is spread by droplets and is not airborne so physical separation is enough to reduce the risk of spread to others even if they are in the same room;
- If it is not possible to maintain a distance of 2m a staff member caring for a student should wear a face covering or mask. Gloves should not be used as the virus does not pass through skin;
- Provide a mask for the person presenting with symptoms if one is available. He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises;
- Assess whether the individual who is displaying symptoms can immediately be directed to go home/be brought home by parents and call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home;
- Facilitate the person presenting with symptoms remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and facilitate them calling their doctor. The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. Advice should be given to the person presenting with symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bag provided;
- If the person is well enough to go home, arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible and advise them to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used;
- If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a COVID-19 suspect;
- Carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery;
- Arrange for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved – (*details at Section 6*)

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 and student confidentiality is essential at all times.

8) Staff Duties

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

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

9) COVID-19 related absence management

The management of a COVID-19 related absence will be managed in line with agreed procedures with the Department of Education.

10) Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

The Department recognises the need for 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 individual staff members 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'.

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

APPENDIX 1

COVID-19 Policy Statement

St. Louis 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/ETB 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 Representative(s), who will be supported in line with the agreement between the Department and education partners.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2 Pre-Return to Work Questionnaire COVID-19

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

Name: _____

Name of School: _____

Name of Principal: _____ Date: _____

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

I confirm, to the best of my knowledge that I have no symptoms of COVID-19, am not self-isolating, awaiting results of a COVID-19 test or been advised to restrict my movements. Please note: The 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 Lead Worker Representative – Post primary Schools

The COVID-19 Return to Work Safely Protocol is designed to support employers and workers to put measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. The Protocol was developed following discussion and agreement between the Government, Trade Unions and Employers at the Labour Employer Economic Forum.

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

The purpose of this section is to set out the provisions in respect of the LWR in schools. These arrangements will operate for the 2020/21 school year and will be kept under review by the parties.

This document should be read in conjunction with:

- the COVID-19 Return to Work Safely Protocol;
- the Guidance and FAQs for Public Service Employers during COVID-19;
- COVID-19 Response Plan for Post primary Schools (available on the Department of Education website).

1. Collaborative Approach

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

Strong communication and a shared collaborative approach is key to protecting against the spread of COVID-19 in schools, and looking after the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and students. Adherence to the Return to Work Protocol will only be achieved if everyone has a shared obligation in implementing the measures contained within the Protocol in their place of work.

If a staff member has any concerns or observations in relation to the COVID-19 Response Plan, control measures or the adherence to such measures by staff, students or others, they should contact the LWR who will engage with school management.

2. Role of the Lead Worker Representative

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

In summary, the role of the LWR is to:

- Represent all staff in the workplace regardless of role, and be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of different staff cohorts;
- Keep up to date with the latest COVID-19 public health advice;
- Work collaboratively with school management to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19;
- Consult with school management on the control measures required to minimise the risk of staff and students being exposed to COVID-19;
- Promote good hygiene practices, in conjunction with school management, such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette along with maintaining social distancing in accordance with public health advice;
- Assist school management with the implementation of measures to suppress COVID-19 in the workplace in line with the Return to Work Safely Protocol and current public health advice;
- Monitor, in conjunction with school management, adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19;
- Conduct reviews of safety measures that are in place to address and suppress COVID-19 in the workplace. Reviews (including an examination of the workplace) should be conducted on a regular basis (at least twice per week);
- Report any issues of concern immediately to school management and keep records of such issues and actions taken to rectify them;
- Consult with the school management on the school's COVID-19 Response Plan in the event of someone developing COVID-19 while in school including the location of an isolation area and a safe route to that area;
- Following any incident, assess with the school management any follow up action that is required;
- Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace;
- Make representations to school management on behalf of their colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace.

3. What can a Lead Worker Representative Do?

The LWR may consult with, and make representations to, school management on any issue of concern in relation to COVID-19. These include issues in relation to:

- Cleaning protocols and their implementation
- Physical Distancing
- Configuration/re-configuration of the school facilities, including classrooms, corridors, halls, open areas, entry and exit points, school grounds etc.
- Implementation of one-way systems in the school to ensure social distancing including when entering and exiting the school
- Hand Hygiene facilities including their location and whether they are stocked and maintained
- Hand sanitising
- Staff awareness around hand hygiene in the school
- Respiratory hygiene

- Personal Protective Equipment
- At Risk Groups
- Visitors/Contractors

4. Does a LWR have any legal responsibilities?

No. A Lead Worker Representative does not have any duties in relation to COVID-19 other than those that apply to employees generally. In other words, the LWR is not responsible for the control measures within an organisation, which remains the employer's responsibility.

5. Lead Worker Representative(s)

Every school will appoint one Lead Worker Representative.

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

6. Selection of Lead Worker Representative(s)

The school staff are entitled to select staff members for the LWR position(s). The LWR(s) represent all staff in the workplace regardless of role and must be aware of specific issues that may arise in respect of different staff cohorts. In this regard, where a school has two LWRs, the roles should be spread between teaching and non-teaching staff where feasible e.g. where there is a significant number of non-teaching staff in the school and one or more expressions of interest are received from that cohort (this will be discussed further between the parties).

The process for the selection and appointment of the LWR(s) is that management will seek expressions of interest from all staff in the first instance. A template email for this purpose is attached. If an election is necessary, all school staff have a vote to select the LWR(s).

The LWR(s) will, following selection by the school staff, be formally appointed by the BoM/ETB. The LWR(s) will be required to confirm, prior to taking up the role, that they have been provided with and have completed the requisite training and that they are fully aware of the requirements of the role.

7. Supports for the Lead Worker Representative/s

The LWR(s) shall be entitled to:

- Be provided with information and training in respect of their role [*further detail to be provided*];
- Be consulted by school management on the control measures being put in place by the school to minimise the risk of being exposed to COVID-19;
- Regular communication with school management on issues related to COVID-19;
- Be informed of changes in practice arising from COVID-19 response measures;
- Have access to any risk assessments prepared or carried out in relation to COVID-19 and to details of incidents of suspected COVID-19 cases that have been notified to the HSE, where they occurred and any actions taken.

- Be provided with the necessary facilities to enable them to consult with employees or prepare any submissions or reports. These might include access to a meeting room, photocopier, communications and equipment.

Where the LWR is a teacher, the LWR will receive protected time of 2 hours per week from timetable to enable them to carry out their duties in that role. In the rare instances where the appointment of a teacher selected for the LWR would cause curricular/timetabling difficulties which cannot be resolved, school management will examine internal and external possibilities to enable the teacher's appointment as LWR. Where the matter cannot be resolved, management will set out the reasons why this is the case. In this circumstance, an alternative individual must be appointed as LWR.

Where the LWR is an SNA, 66 of the "72 hours" will be utilised by the LWR to carry out their duties in that role.

Where the LWR is a Secretary or Caretaker, a re-prioritisation of duties by school management should be carried out to afford the staff member sufficient time to carry out their duties in that role within the scope of their normal contracted hours.

8. Procedure for dealing with issues that arise

Where a COVID-19 control concern is identified by the LWR (or is notified to the LWR by a staff member), the LWR should bring this to the attention of the Principal. Action points for addressing the issue should where possible be agreed between the LWR and the Principal as a matter of urgency. Staff should be informed of the outcome. It is envisaged that issues will be resolved at school level to the maximum extent possible.

If agreement cannot be reached, the LWR should notify the Board of Management (Chairperson in the first instance)/ Education and Training Board head office of the issue. Action points for addressing the issue should where possible be agreed between the LWR and the BoM/ETB head office as a matter of urgency. Staff should be informed of the outcome.

If, having exhausted the process above, a serious issue of concern remains outstanding, the LWR may have recourse to the Health and Safety Authority.

Signed Patrick J. Kilbane Date 1st Oct 2021

Mr. Patrick J. Kilbane.
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed Regina Anderson Date 1st October 2021

Ms. Regina Anderson
Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Appendix 4**Contact Tracing Log**

Name of School			School Contact Person	
Address of School			For Queries only: Phone No	
			Email	
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

