

08/09/2021



# COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of Bray Institute of Further Education

Coronavirus  
**COVID-19**



Coronavirus  
**COVID-19**  
Public Health  
Advice

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This is a living document and may be reviewed and amended to take into account new guidance from [www.Gov.ie](http://www.Gov.ie), [www.dbei.ie](http://www.dbei.ie), [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie), [www.hpsc.ie](http://www.hpsc.ie), [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie); [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie) or agreements with education partners as appropriate for post primary schools/colleges.

## **1) Introduction – Part 1**

The Minister for Education has published “The Roadmap for the Full Return to College” on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 2020. 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.

It has been 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). Each workplace is required to have a COVID-19 Response Plan. 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 College 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.

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

One of the key challenges is to balance the need for a practical and sensible level of caution with the need to provide a supportive environment for teaching and learning. This document identifies the steps schools can take to do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into the college and the steps that can be taken to reduce the likelihood of the spread within the college itself in the event that COVID-19 is introduced to the college.

## **1) Introduction – Part 2**

Further to this, the ETBI has published “Implementing a Safe Return to Further Education & Training Centres” in August 2021.

This paper represents a whole-of sector approach to the safe and sustainable operation for the coming academic year. It sets out detail for the implementation of the A safe return to on-site further and higher education and research (Safe Return Plan) published by D/FHERIS on 15 June 2021. We are also mindful of the success and reach of the vaccination programme and that represents a critical contextual pillar as set out below.

## **Context outlined in this document**

The re-opening of further education and training centres in September 2021 is underpinned by three primary pillars:

1. Further education and training has been nominated as an 'essential service' by government.
2. There is an overwhelming desire from learners for a return to on-site activity, with practical learning to be delivered on-site and a need for all learners to have an onsite FET experience in order to maintain participation levels, particularly among those target groups most at risk of exclusion.
3. The vast majority, if not all, adults including further education and training learners will have been offered the opportunity to be vaccinated by September 2021.

## **2) What is a COVID-19 Response Plan?**

A COVID-19 Response Plan is designed to support the staff and Board of Management (BOM) in Bray Institute of Further Education in putting measures in place that aim to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the college environment

The COVID-19 Response Plan details the policies and practices necessary for Bray Institute of Further Education to meet the Government's '*Return to Work Safely Protocol*', the Department of Education plan for college reopening that will aim to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in the college environment.

It is important that the resumption of college-based teaching and learning and the reopening of schools 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 college where the overriding objective is to protect the health of staff and students while promoting the educational and development needs of the students in the college. 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 BOM, KWETB, staff, students and parents.

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

*Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information provided in this document. However, should errors or omissions be identified, please notify us so that appropriate measures can be taken to rectify same.*

### 3) **Bray Institute of Further Education COVID-19 Policy**

A COVID-19 policy outlines the commitment of the college to implement the plan and help prevent the spread of the virus. The policy will be signed and dated by the chairperson and principal of the BOM and will be brought to the attention of the staff, students, parents and all other members of the college community.

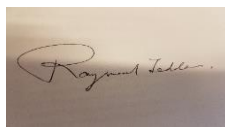
#### **BIFE COVID -19 Policy Statement**

Bray Institute of Further Education 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/KWETB and all college 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 college 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 college
- provide instructions for staff and students to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during college time
- implement cleaning in line with Department of Education advice

All college 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: \_\_\_\_\_ Raymond Tedders

Date: 27.08.2020 \_\_\_\_\_

#### **4) Planning and Preparing for Return to College**

The BOM/KWETB aims to facilitate the resumption of college-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 Bray Institute of Further Education and the applicable controls are outlined in this document.

Before reopening college for the 2021/2022 college year Bray Institute of Further Education will have processes in place to include the following:

- Arrangements to keep up to date with public health advice, changes to any Government plans for the safe reopening of society and Department of Education updates.
- Arrangements to pass on this information in a timely manner to staff, students, parents and others as required;
- Ensured that staff have reviewed the training materials provided by the Department of Education (***details at Section 4.1***);
- Provided staff with access to the Return to Work (RTW) form (***details at Section 4.2***);
- Identified a Lead Worker representative (***details at Section 4.3***);
- Displayed posters and other signage to prevent introduction and spread of COVID-19 (***details at Section 4.4***);
- Made the necessary changes to the college layout to support the redesign of classrooms to support physical distancing (***details at Section 4.5***);
- Removed unnecessary clutter to facilitate ongoing cleaning of the college but take into account the importance of having educational materials to create a stimulating learning environment.
- Updated the health and safety risk assessment (***details at Section 4.6***);
- Made necessary arrangements to limit access to the college and maintain records of contacts to the college (***details at 4.7***).
- Reviewed the college buildings to check the following:
  - Does the water system need flushing at outlets following low usage to prevent Legionella disease;
  - Has college equipment and mechanical ventilation been checked for signs of deterioration or damage before being used again;
  - Have bin collections and other essential services resumed.

#### **4.1) Induction Training (to be completed by new staff)**

All new staff of Bray Institute of Further Education will undertake and complete COVID-19 Induction Training prior to returning to the college building. 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 college
- Outline of the COVID-19 response plan

Staff will be kept fully informed of the control measures in place in the college 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 BOM/KWETB.

#### **4.2) 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.

A RTW form should be completed and returned before returning to work.

The principal will also provide details of the **Induction Training** for completion by staff and details of any additional health and safety measures in place in the college to facilitate the staff member's return to the college facility.

Details of the working arrangements that apply to the very high risk College staff, is in accordance with those applying for the public service generally, and is detailed in the relevant Department of Education circulars available on the Department's website.

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

- are over 70 years of age – even if 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
- have severe respiratory conditions including cystic fibrosis, severe asthma, pulmonary fibrosis, lung fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and severe COPD
- have a condition that means they 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. Details of the arrangements that will apply for these staff, which will be in accordance with those applying for the public service generally, will be updated by the Department of Education following consultation with management bodies and unions and a circular will issue to all schools.

### **4.3) 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 college management 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 Bray Institute of Further Education. These arrangements will operate for the 2020/21 college 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/KWETB and college 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 college 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.



<b>BIFE Lead worker Representatives LWR's</b>	<b>Contact Details</b>
Paddy Glynn	087-6741631
Naomi Kidd	01-2829668

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.

Full details of the arrangements which apply for the LWR in post primary schools is set out below:

### **Lead Worker Representative – Further Education College**

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 Colleges. These arrangements will operate for the 2021/2022 college 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 college 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 college management.

## **2. Role of the Lead Worker Representative**

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 college management to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees in relation to COVID-19;
- Consult with college 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 college management, such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette along with maintaining social distancing in accordance with public health advice.
- Assist college 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 college 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 college management and keep records of such issues and actions taken to rectify them.
- Consult with the college management on the college's COVID-19 Response Plan in the event of someone developing COVID-19 while in college including the location of an isolation area and a safe route to that area.
- Following any incident, assess with the college management any follow up action that is required.
- Consult with colleagues on matters relating to COVID-19 in the workplace;
- Make representations to college 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, college 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 college facilities, including classrooms, corridors, halls, open areas, entry and exit points, college grounds etc.
- Implementation of one-way systems in the college to ensure social distancing

- including when entering and exiting the college
- Hand Hygiene facilities including their location and whether they are stocked and maintained
- Hand sanitising
- Staff awareness around hand hygiene in the college
- Respiratory hygiene
- Personal Protective Equipment
- At Risk Groups
- Visitors/Contractors

#### **4. 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.
- Induction Training for LWR's is available through the following HSA link;  
[https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid-19/hsa\\_return\\_to\\_work\\_safely\\_online\\_courses/hsa\\_return\\_to\\_work\\_safely\\_online\\_courses.html](https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid-19/hsa_return_to_work_safely_online_courses/hsa_return_to_work_safely_online_courses.html)

The LWR's should complete the quiz and return the completed certificates to BIFE.  
*(Further training may be provided).*

- Be consulted by college management on the control measures being put in place by the college to minimise the risk of being exposed to COVID-19.
- Regular communication with college 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.

#### **5. 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 college level to the maximum extent possible.

If agreement cannot be reached, the LWR should notify the ETB Director of FET 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](#).

#### **4.4) Signage**

Bray Institute of Further Education will display signage outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID- 19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene. Please see link below to these posters. Any such supply can be sourced locally.  
<https://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Announcements/information-for-schools-preschools-and-third-level-institutions-on-the-coronavirus.html#1>

#### **4.5) Making Changes to College Layout**

Maintaining physical distancing in the college environment is recommended as one of the key control measures to minimize the risk of the introduction and spread of COVID-19. **Section 5.4** below contains a link to the suite of illustrative post primary classroom layouts.

Bray Institute of Further Education will in so far as possible reconfigure classrooms and other areas to support physical distancing in line with the guidance in advance of college reopening.

#### **4.6) Health and Safety Risk Assessment**

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the college environment. A risk assessment to identify the control measures required to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 will be undertaken before return to college in 2020/2021.

Bray Institute of Further Education will review its emergency procedures involving, fire safety, first aid, accidents, and dangerous occurrences to consider any new risks that arise due to the college's COVID-19 Response Plan. Any changes to the schools existing emergency procedures will be documented and incorporated into the college's safety statement.

Bray Institute of Further Education will also review the existing risk assessments to consider any new risks that arise due to the college's COVID-19 Response Plan. Any changes to the college's current risk assessments will also be documented and incorporated into the college's safety statement.

#### **First Aid/ Emergency Procedure**

The standard First Aid/emergency procedure shall continue to apply in Bray Institute of Further Education. 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.

#### **4.7) Access to College and Contact Log**

Access to the college building will be in line with agreed college procedures.

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. A detailed sign in/sign out log of those entering the college facilities will be maintained. The college will maintain a log of staff and students contacts.

The Data Protection Commission has provided guidance on the data protection implications of the return to work protocols. This advice can be found

here: <https://www.dataprotection.ie/en/news-media/data-protection-implications-return-work-safely-protocol>

## **5) 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 college. 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 college. 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/Colleges:***

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

- Advise staff and students that have symptoms not to attend college, to phone their doctor and to follow HSE guidance on self-isolation.
- Advise staff and students not to attend college 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 college 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 college (**details at Section 8**).
- Advise everyone entering the college building that they need to perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser.
- Advise all relevant parties that visitors to the college 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.

### **5.1) Know the Symptoms of COVID-19**

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms of coronavirus (which includes the DELTA variant).

Common symptoms of coronavirus include:

- a fever (high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above).
- a new cough - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry.
- shortness of breath or breathing difficulties.
- loss or change in your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal
- Fatigue
- Aches and Pains

Other uncommon symptoms of coronavirus include:

- sore throat
- headaches
- runny or stuffy noses
- feeling sick or vomiting
- diarrhoea

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

If you have any symptoms of COVID-19 (coronavirus), self-isolate (stay in your room) and phone your family doctor straight away to see if you need a free COVID-19 test. Getting an early diagnosis means, you can get the help you need and take steps to avoid spreading the virus, if you have it.

For the complete list of symptoms, please refer to the HSE Website. Symptoms may be subject to change so regular review of the HSE Website is advised. If you do not have symptoms, you can get a free COVID-19 (coronavirus) test at a COVID-19 walk-in test centre.

## COVID-19 Tracker App

COVID Tracker app is a free and easy-to-use mobile phone app that will:

- alert you if you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 (coronavirus)
- keep other app users safe by alerting them if you test positive for COVID-19
- give you advice on what to do if you have symptoms

You can download the free app from Apple's AppStore or the GooglePlay store

**Employers and workers must keep themselves up to date on Public Health information as this can be updated on a regular basis.** Public Health information on close contacts, casual contacts and testing is available from the HSE website

### 5.2) 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 and safely into a nearby bin.

By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and COVID-19.

### 5.3) Hand Hygiene

Staff and students should understand why hand hygiene is important as well as when and how to wash their hands.

Bray Institute of Further Education will promote good hygiene and display posters throughout the college on how to wash your hands. Follow the HSE guidelines on handwashing:

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

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 will be managed to avoid congregation of people waiting to use wash hand basins and hand sanitisers.

Hand sanitiser dispensers will be deployed more readily at exit and entry points of schools and classrooms and care should be taken to clean up any hand sanitizer spills to prevent risks of falls.

Warm water is preferable to hot or cold water for hand washing but if the plumbing system only supplies cold water, a soap that emulsifies easily in cold water will be provided.

Wash hand basins, running water, liquid soap and hand drying facilities will be provided in all toilets, kitchens and any food preparation areas.

Hand washing facilities will be maintained in good condition and supplies of soap and towels will be topped up regularly to encourage everyone to use them.

Hot air dryers are an acceptable alternative for hand drying but must be regularly maintained. There is no evidence that hand dryers are associated with increased risk of transmission of COVID-19.

Posters displaying hand washing techniques and promoting hand washing will be 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, but non-alcohol-based hand rubs can be used too.

When hand rubs/gels are being used in college care should be taken to ensure that students do not ingest them as they are flammable and toxic.

### **Choosing a Hand Sanitiser**

Hand sanitising gels are biocides and fall under the Biocidal Products Regulation (BPR) –Regulation (EU) 528/2012. The Pesticide Registration and Control Division (PRCD) of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) is the competent authority for biocides in Ireland. Only biocidal products listed on the DAFM biocide product register are legal to market and use in Ireland. Schools should ensure that all sanitisers and disinfectants they have carry a PCS 9xxxx, PCS 1xxxxx, IE/BPA 7xxxx or an EU-000xxx-xx registration number on the label. Each product registered by DAFM will carry a unique registration number specific to that particular product. If the product label does not contain any of these number formats, Schools should not purchase or use the product. To confirm the biocide can be used on the Irish market, Schools can check the registers of products online at [Biocidal Product Registers](#). Further information from DAFM on Sanitisers and Disinfectants is available by contacting them at [biocide-enforcement@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:biocide-enforcement@agriculture.gov.ie) or at the [Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine](#) website.

Hand sanitisers for use against COVID-19 must contain a minimum of 60% alcohol. Non-alcohol based hand sanitiser may also be used. However, in choosing a hand sanitiser, it is important to ensure that it is effective against Coronavirus.

### **Frequency of Hand Hygiene**

Students and staff should perform hand hygiene:

- On arrival at college.
- Before eating or drinking.
- After using the toilet.



- After petting animals.
- After playing outdoors.
- When their hands are physically dirty.
- When they cough or sneeze.
- Wash hands at regular intervals

A drawdown framework which was established for the 2020/21 school year will continue to remain in place for the 2021/22 school year to enable schools to purchase necessary supplies of hand-sanitisers and PPE requirements. The Department will provide funding for the costs associated with the hand sanitising and PPE requirements in schools.

#### **5.4) Physical Distancing**

Physical distancing can be usefully applied in a Further Education college setting allowing for some flexibility when needed. It must be applied in a practical way to recognise that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on this issue. Care should be taken to avoid generating tension or potential conflict and some flexibility in the implementation of measures may be required at times.

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 1 m 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***

The guidance documents provided by the Department of Education on optimal college layout and referenced at section 5.4 above will be used by Bray Institute of Further Education to increase separation to the greatest degree possible.

To maintain physical distancing in the classroom Bray Institute of Further Education will endeavour to:

1. Reconfigure class spaces to maximise physical distancing.
2. Utilise and reconfigure all available space in the Institute to maximise physical distancing.
3. Review Timetables
4. Consider Use of Live Streaming within the Institute
5. The teacher's desk will be at least 1m and where possible 2m from the student's

desks.

6. Accessing available spaces within the local community

[A link to the “Framework to maintain Physical Distancing in the Classroom in Post Primary Schools with a full return of all Students for the 2020/21 College Year” is provided here.](#)

[You can see a link to illustrated classroom layouts to maintain social distancing here.](#)

### ***Decreasing interaction***

The extent to which decreasing interaction is possible in a Further Education College will depend on the college 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.

Where students have an elective subject, they will move quickly into the new class, observing as much physical distance as possible.

Hand washing and/or sanitising will be required when moving between classes by teachers and students.

Physical distancing between the teacher and class will 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.

### **Physical Distancing outside of the classroom and within the Institute**

#### ***College drop off/collection***

Arrangements for dropping off/collecting students should be arranged to maintain physical distancing of 2m where possible.

Walking/cycling to college should be encouraged as much as possible.

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

Staggered drop off/pick up times should be arranged where feasible.

The college will use additional access points, throughout the day to reduce congestion on the corridors.

Students will be requested to go straight 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.

Physical distancing will be observed by staff members within the staffroom through the use of staggered breaks.

Staff meetings will be held remotely or in small groups or in large spaces to facilitate physical distancing.

There will be a no hand shaking policy.

Gathering of college staff will be minimized at the beginning or end of the college day.

### **Canteen**

Physical distancing will be applied in canteen facilities

Staggered breaks will enable extended canteen serving times and aligned with class grouping to ensure social distancing.

A queue management system will be implemented.

Make sure students clean their hands before and after entering the canteen area.

### **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.

### **Ventilation**

The Department has published guidance setting out the practical steps for good ventilation in accordance with public health advice 'Practical Steps for the Deployment of Good Ventilation Practices in Schools' The guidance sets out an overall approach

for schools that windows should be open as fully as possible when classrooms are not in use (e.g. during break-times or lunch-times (assuming not in use) and also at the end of each school day) and partially open when classrooms are in use. The guidance provides that good ventilation can be achieved in classrooms without causing discomfort, particularly during cold weather. The Department has also published guidance on how these practical steps measures can be supplemented and enhanced by the use of Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) monitors. Links to all aforementioned guidance can be accessed here.

## **5.5) Use of PPE in Schools**

The Department has published “Guidance to Post Primary Schools on PPE consumables and equipment” on [gov.ie/backtoschool](https://www.gov.ie/backtoschool). This provides schools with the information needed on the appropriate quantities of PPE consumables and equipment to support the full and safe reopening of schools.

The updated advice from the HPSC to the Department of Education has recommended that face coverings should be worn by staff members where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres from other staff, parents, essential visitors or pupils. The Department has accepted this recommendation. Accordingly, it is now a requirement for face coverings to be worn by staff members where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres from other staff, parents, essential visitors or pupils.

Workers should be trained in the proper use, donning/doffing, cleaning, storing and disposal of PPE. The HPSC has produced posters and videos on the correct donning and doffing of PPE available on the HPSC and HSA websites [https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid-19\\_coronavirus\\_information\\_and\\_resources/covid-19\\_business\\_supports/business\\_supports/hse-hpsc\\_posters\\_and\\_videos/](https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid-19_coronavirus_information_and_resources/covid-19_business_supports/business_supports/hse-hpsc_posters_and_videos/)

PPE will also need to be used at 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 college 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;
- Administering first aid

Where staff provide healthcare to students with medical needs in the college environment they should apply standard precautions as per usual practice.

### **Reception Areas**

Consideration should be given to the use of Perspex in reception areas where it is not possible for staff to maintain a physical distance of 2m from other staff or students. Minor works funding grant can be used for this purpose

## **Masks/Face Coverings**

Cloth face coverings act as a barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from travelling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the face covering coughs, sneezes, talks or raises their voice. Cloth face coverings are therefore intended to prevent transmission of the virus from the wearer (who may not know that they are infected) to those with whom they come into close contact.

It is therefore a requirement that teachers, staff and students attending further education college wear a face covering when a physical distance of 2m from other staff or students cannot be maintained.

In certain situations the use of clear visors should be considered, for example staff interacting with students with hearing difficulties or learning difficulties.

All students on the BIFE Bus should be asked to wear face coverings unless there is a good reason not to do so.

Cloth face coverings should not be worn by any of the following groups:

- Any person with difficulty breathing
- Any person who is unconscious or incapacitated
- Any person who is unable to remove the face-covering without assistance
- Any person who has special needs and who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the face covering, for example persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, sensory concerns or tactile sensitivity.

All staff and students wearing face coverings should be reminded to not touch the face covering and to wash or sanitise their hands (using hand sanitiser) before putting on and after taking off the face covering.

Information should be provided on the proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6ZqdpLfSqw>

All teachers and staff should be aware that they should wash or sanitize hands (using a hand sanitizer) before and after helping a student put on or adjust a face covering.

Face coverings should be stored in a space designated for each student that is separate from others when not being worn (e.g., in individually labelled containers or bags).

Cloth face coverings should be washed after every day of use and/or before being used again, or if visibly soiled.

Face coverings should not be worn if they are wet. A wet cloth face covering may make it difficult to breathe.

Schools should consider having additional disposable face coverings available for students, teachers, and staff in case a back-up face covering is needed during the day.

Whilst staff may wish to utilize their own face covering on a day-to-day basis, schools should have available a stock of additional disposable or multi-use face coverings, or if

appropriate face visors, available for staff in case a back-up face covering is needed throughout the day or where required on an ongoing basis.

On the use of face masks by staff, schools should consider the specific circumstances where the use of medical face masks, to EU Standard EN 14683, may be more appropriate for staff (for example where staff by necessity need to be in close and continued proximity with students with intimate care needs such as SNAs or College Bus Escorts).

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

### **Medical Grade Masks**

Schools must provide medical grade masks in the EN14683 category to all SNAs and teachers in special schools and special classes and those staff by necessity that need to be in close and continued proximity with pupils with intimate care needs including School Bus Escorts.

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

### **Gloves**

The use of disposable gloves in the college 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.

### **Aprons**

Aprons may also be appropriate in certain circumstances including for intimate care needs or for staff assigned to cleaning an area where a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 was present.

## **6) Impact of COVID-19 on certain college activities**

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

### *Music Performance*

Performances and music practices/performances involving wind instruments may pose a higher level of risk and special consideration should be given to how they are held ensuring that the room is well-ventilated and the distance between performers is maintained.

### *Sport Activities*

Bray Institute of Further Education will refer to the HPSC guidance on Return to Sport. Link to return to sport protocols is found here.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/07253-return-to-sports-protocols/>

### *Shared Equipment*

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

Electronics – Shared electronic devices such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards, Cameras, remote controls, mics, mixers, DJ Equipment, headphones, should be cleaned between use and consideration will 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 will be cleaned between uses.

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.

Shared Sports Equipment – Minimise equipment sharing will be minimised and shared equipment should be cleaned between uses by different people.

Body Therapies and Holistic Health – Where possible students should use their own equipment in areas such as beauty, holistic, fashion theatre and media make up hairdressing and barbering.

Furniture Design - Shared tools such as lathes, hammers, saws etc should be cleaned between use.

Kitchens and Stores equipment – Shared equipment such as cookers, sinks, fridges, food containers and smaller utensils should be cleaned between use.

## **7) Hygiene and Cleaning in Schools**

The Department of Education will provide additional funding to schools to support the enhanced cleaning required to minimise the risks of COVID-19. Details of the funding supports will be provided to schools by way of circular and will be updated as required. The funding will be provided to schools in advance of reopening.

The specific advice in relation to college cleaning is set out in the HPSC advice and will be covered in the induction training. 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. Schools are asked to carefully read and understand the cleaning advice and to apply that to all areas of the college as appropriate.

Schools are reminded to take particular care of the hygiene arrangements for wash hand and toilet facilities.

In summary, each college setting should be cleaned at **least once per day**. Additional cleaning if available should be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, handrails, chairs/arm rests, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities.

If students are moving between classrooms consideration may be given to appropriate cleaning products being provided to enable them to wipe down their desk, chair and surface before leaving the room.

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 collection of used waste disposal bags from offices and other areas within the college 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.

Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.).

***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.



## 8) Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19

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

A designated isolation area has been identified within the college building. **(Room 6A)** 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 symptom of COVID-19 while at college 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 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 7)**

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. School staff should be encouraged to download the HSE COVID-19 tracker app to assist Public Health for contact tracing purposes. Both in and out of the school setting (see section 5.1).

## 9) Staff Duties

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

The 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 college. All staff have a key role to play.

In this regard and to facilitate a safe return to work, these duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Adhere to the College 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 college.
- 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 college 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 college facility.
- Keep themselves informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.

## **10) COVID-19 related absence management**

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

## **11) Employee Assistance and Wellbeing Programme**

The Department recognises the need for college staff wellbeing and collective self-care. Support for college 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).

The EAS also provides advice and support to managers and delivers interventions to help them deal with health and wellbeing issues in the workplace.

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 college year.

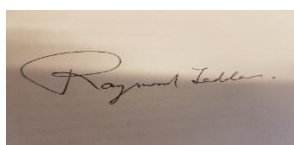
## **BIFE Pre-Return to Work Questionnaire COVID-19**

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 College: Bray Institute of Further Education  
 Name of Principal: Ray Tedders 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 college 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: \_\_\_\_\_ Raymond Tedders

27.08.2020 \_\_\_\_\_