



## Covid-19 Risk Assessment

### Covid-19 Risk Assessment

Covid-19 is a new illness that can affect a person's lungs and airways. It is caused by a virus called Coronavirus. Symptoms can be mild, moderate, severe or fatal.

Legislation<sup>1</sup> under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 requires health surveillance to be carried out based on risk assessment. Employers are required to undertake a risk assessment with regard to Covid-19 and potential workplace exposure where the nature of work poses an occupational exposure health risk to Covid-19.

This risk assessment is designed to identify suitable control measures to mitigate the risk of Covid-19 infection. Risk assessments need to be regularly reviewed and updated and be based on the current best practice in relation to infection prevention and control.

### What is the risk?

### Spread of Covid-19 Coronavirus

**Key Challenge:** A key challenge for schools during this pandemic is to balance the need for a practical and sensible level of caution with the need to provide a supportive environment for students/students and where teachers feel able to engage with students in a way that supports their learning.

**Transmission:** Being a respiratory virus, Covid-19 is transmitted through respiratory droplets, with person-to-person contact appearing to be the main method of transmission. The virus can also survive on contaminated surfaces, possibly for up to several days. Both symptomatic and asymptomatic transmission (when a person is displaying no symptoms) occurs.

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<sup>1</sup> List of relevant Legislation

- Regulation 10 of S.I. No. 619/2001 - Safety, Health and Welfare At Work (Chemical Agents) Regulations, 2001
- Regulation 12 of S.I. No. 78/2001 - Safety, Health and Welfare At Work (Carcinogens) Regulations, 2001 .
- Regulation 20 of S.I. No. 386/2006 - Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Exposure to Asbestos) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- Regulation 131 of S.I. No. 299/2007 - Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 (Control of Noise at Work)
- Regulation 141 of S.I. No. 299/2007 - Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 (Control of Vibrations at Work)

**Vaccination:** There are now vaccinations available and being rolled out as per the HSE plan.

**Who Might be harmed?** Educate Together Officials, Principal, Deputy Principal(s) Teachers, Staff, Students, Visitors, Contractors, Parents / Guardians.

**Action by who?** Principal on behalf of the ET.

**Action by When?** Action required to be completed by Mid-August 2020

**Covid-19 - Primary Symptoms:** Fever (higher temperature of 38 degrees C. (100.4 degrees F.) or above - Cough which can be any kind of cough, not just a dry cough - shortness of breath or breathing difficulties - loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste

**Human Health Risk:** mild, moderate, severe or fatal. Older adults, or those with underlying medical conditions appear to be at a higher risk of developing more serious complications from Covid-19 illness.

**This Risk Assessment has been prepared in response to the emerging risks associated with Covid-19 pandemic.**

**Note:** Staff, parents and students (as age appropriate) should understanding the benefits and risks of education and social interaction and that it is not possible to guarantee that infection can be prevented in any setting either in an education centre, at home or in any other setting where people interact with other people.

Risk	Controls implemented to mitigate against Risk of Spreading Covid-19
Risk of Covid-19 spreading in the School environment	The risk is of spread of infection exists in all interpersonal interactions such as student-student, teacher -teacher, and teacher-student and is not limited to the classroom and requires to be managed in all settings within Galway Educate Together Secondary School. This risk is mitigated through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creation of a school covid-19 response plan in line with DES guidance and the Return to Work Safely Protocol and public health advice and these documents have been updated for reopening in August 2021</li> <li>- Sanitiser units located at entrances and exits</li> <li>- Display of Covid-19 Information Signage throughout the school</li> <li>- Covid-19 Induction Training for all new staff</li> <li>- Covid-19 Induction Training for all students</li> <li>- New updated Return to work form with updated questions received and reviewed by staff returning to school at least 3 days in advance.</li> </ul>

<p>Risk of Covid-19 spreading in the School environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encouraging good hand hygiene technique, respiratory hygiene and social distancing</li> <li>- Creation of a contact tracing log</li> <li>- Plan in place for how to deal with a suspected case</li> <li>- Provision of Covid-19 presentations for staff, students, parents and guardians.</li> <li>- Prohibiting of social physical contact, no hand to hand greetings / hugs.</li> <li>- Promotion of awareness of Covid-19 and it's symptoms<sup>32</sup> among staff, parents / guardians and students with age appropriate posters, email/text communications</li> <li>- All staff and students to wear face mask except where exemption exists for students with learning needs identified in the DES guidance. Medical grade masks in the EN16483 category to be provided for SNA's.</li> <li>- Heightened awareness by staff, parents / guardians and children (age appropriate) on how to protect themselves and each other as well as how to recognise and report symptoms of Covid-19 infection</li> <li>- New guidance from DES on ventilation requires windows to be as open as possible in rooms when not in use and also at the end of the school day and partially open when the room is in use.</li> <li>- The exclusion of staff, student, visitors and contractors who are ill</li> <li>- Requirement that staff/students who experience symptoms of Covid-19 or other acute infectious disease are not to attend school, to phone their doctor and to follow HSE guidance on self-isolation.</li> <li>- Requirement that staff members are not to present for work if they have been identified by HSE as a Contact of a person with Covid-19 and to follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement.</li> <li>- Requirement that staff members / students who develop symptoms at school to bring this to the attention of their teacher / SNA promptly and to follow HSE guidance on self-isolation</li> <li>- Advice to parents not to bring their children to school if the child has symptoms of a viral respiratory infection or if there is someone in the household suspected or known to have Covid-19.</li> <li>- Advice to parents not to bring their children to school if they have been identified as Covid-19 contacts</li> </ul>
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<p>Risk of Covid-19 spreading in the School environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advice to parents that the school reserves the right to decline entry to students who appear to have fever or respiratory tract infection.</li> <li>- Ensuring students (as appropriate) are aware of the reason why they should not attend if they have respiratory symptoms.</li> <li>- Ensure students are aware that if they develop signs or symptoms of Covid-19 when at school to let their teacher know</li> <li>- Ensuring everyone who entering the school / classroom performs hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser.</li> <li>- Teachers required to maintain a minimum of 1m distance and where possible 2m when dealing with students.</li> <li>- Teachers taking measures to avoid close contact at face to face level such as remaining standing rather than sitting beside/crouching down</li> <li>- Class space reconfigured to maximise physical distancing (where possible)</li> <li>- Avoidance of situations that require people to sit or stand in direct physical contact with other people is to be avoided.</li> <li>- Where students need to move about within the classroom to perform activities (for example to access a shared resource) this is to be organised to the greatest extent possible so as to minimise congregation around the point of access to the shared resource.</li> <li>- Students and teachers are to avoid sharing of personal items such as pens and other writing materials, tablets and phones to the greatest extent possible.</li> <li>- All teachers, other staff and students are to avoid behaviours that involve hand to mouth contact (putting pens/pencils in the mouth etc.)</li> <li>- Where teaching and learning involves use of keyboards or tablets the contact surfaces of the devices are cleaned by user before use and when finished with the keyboard or device and hand hygiene to be encouraged.</li> <li>- Where teaching and learning involves use of whiteboards the contact surfaces of the board are cleaned by user before use and when finished.</li> <li>- In the event of sub-groups being required within a class for group work, to the greatest extent possible the same students will generally be in the same group, although movement between groups may be necessary in the event it is necessary to address tensions between students.</li> <li>- Students will remain in base classroom and teachers will move between rooms</li> <li>- When students have to move to an option subject they are required to move quickly into the new class and are required to be seated with members of their class cohort, observing as much physical distancing as possible.</li> </ul>
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<p>Risk of Covid-19 spreading in the School environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hand washing and/or sanitising and/or desk wipe down is required when moving between classes by both teacher and students.</li> <li>- Students and Teachers required to maintain 2 metres physical distance outside of classroom</li> <li>- Request for social distancing requirements between people congregating at school gates</li> <li>- Students required to go straight to their classroom upon arrival at school</li> <li>- Physical distancing of 2 metres requirements between staff members within the staff room and when not engaged in teaching.</li> <li>- Implementation of a 'No Hand shaking policy'.</li> <li>- Requirement to avoid gathering within the school at the beginning or end of the school day.</li> <li>- Protocol in place in the event a student or teacher should develop symptoms of Covid-19 during the school day.</li> <li>- Communication of risks to teachers, staff, students, parents / guardians.</li> <li>- Advice to teachers, staff, students, parents / guardians of the need to stay at home if showing symptoms of Covid-19 or if in contact with other with symptoms of Covid-19</li> <li>- Regular cleaning and sanitiser of workplace and communal equipment</li> <li>- Use of PPE (gloves/masks) provided when dealing with and isolating Covid-19 suspected symptomatic person.</li> <li>- Sanitisation of shared equipment/ areas.</li> <li>- Increased cleaning and disinfecting of high-risk objects and surfaces schedule, such as door handles, handrails, light switches, reception area, toilets, communal areas etc.</li> <li>- Appointment of Covid-19 Lead Worker representative(s).</li> <li>- Students will be zoned at breaktimes</li> <li>- Assemblies within the school have been cancelled. Where assemblies are necessary, they will be implemented through individual base classes or live streaming into base classes.</li> <li>- Meetings are conducted online in place of face to face meetings where applicable / possible.</li> <li>- Where face to face meetings are absolutely necessary, the length of the meeting and the numbers attending the meeting are kept to a minimum. These meetings will be made on an appointment basis only.</li> <li>- Requirement to walk / pass on the right-hand side corridors within the school to aid traffic flow and avoid contact with others</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Informal gatherings on corridors / stairs / when entering, moving about or exiting the school are prohibited</li> <li>- Unnecessary gatherings of staff at the beginning and termination of the school's day</li> <li>- Students allocated designated work / desk area, with the exception of when they are required to move classes in relation to subject choices</li> <li>- Classrooms have been reconfigured to maximise physical distancing and lockers have been removed</li> <li>- Social distancing of 1m has been implemented in classrooms, so the wearing of face coverings is compulsory</li> <li>- Visitors are required to make an appointment prior to visiting the school</li> <li>- Staff have been instructed to observe social distancing requirement when using the staff room.</li> <li>- Employees are required to clean and sanitise their workstations / areas at the commencement and at the termination periods of their working day / period / area including equipment, etc.</li> <li>- All official business trips and face-to-face interactions been reduced to the absolute minimum</li> <li>- Flushing of the school water systems has taken place to prevent any potential for Legionnaires' disease</li> <li>- Additional equipment has been installed in the school to aid in the prevention of the spread of Covid-19.</li> <li>- Additional hand sanitising stations and signage has been included in our new prefabs rooms.</li> <li>- New procedures for ensuring social distancing in prefabs have been created and explained to staff and students, this involves students waiting outside downstairs rather than crowding on the stairs.</li> <li>- Good communication required between LS5 and LS6 and LS2 and LS3 required at the change over of lessons, breaktimes and lunchtimes, end of day to ensure one room is let out first, this will avoid overcrowding. Presence of Senior Management at these times to help assist. One group waits on one path and the other on the opposite path.</li> </ul>
<p>Risk of Covid-19 to vulnerable high-risk persons</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wearing of Non-medical masks – The wearing of non-medical masks may reduce the transmission of Covid-19 from individuals who may be infected with Covid-19 virus (i.e. asymptomatic) and are therefore compulsory where a 2m physical distancing is not achievable</li> <li>- Some remote teaching learning facilities may be implemented in the event of a student(s) self-isolating at home</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Remote teaching learning facilities may be implemented in the event of staff being required to work from home</li> </ul>
Students with Special Educational Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Arrangements in place with parents/guardians regarding the necessity for highlighting awareness of signs, symptoms or changes which might suggest illness / Covid-19 infections so as to ensure students do not attend school where symptoms are present.</li> <li>- Assistance with hand hygiene for students who may be unable to wash their hands themselves.</li> <li>- Cleaning student's aids and appliance and/ or medical equipment etc.</li> <li>- Teachers and staff using facial coverings / face visors and other required PPE equipment in circumstances where physical distancing is not possible.</li> <li>- Teachers and staff performing regular hand hygiene when working between different students.</li> </ul>
Working at Home of Vulnerable / High Risk Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Arrangements in place with parents/guardians regarding the necessity for highlighting awareness of signs, symptoms or changes which might suggest illness / Covid-19 infections so as to ensure students do not attend school where symptoms are present.</li> <li>- Teachers and staff awareness of the signs, symptoms or changes which might suggest illness / Covid-19 infections so as to ensure teachers do not attend school where symptoms are present.</li> <li>- Teachers and staff using facial coverings / face visors and other required PPE equipment in circumstances where physical distancing of 2m is not possible.</li> </ul>
Risk of hand sanitiser solutions being ingested - toxic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students to be advised on the dangers of accidentally ingesting of hand sanitiser</li> </ul>
Risks of slips or falls due to spillage of hand sanitiser at dispenser locations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Care should be taken to clean up any hand sanitiser spills to prevent risk of falls.</li> </ul>
Risks associated with visitors to school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Visitors to the school are not permitted without prior arrangement with a specific contact point (for example the</li> </ul>

	<p>school office) and are subject to the same controls that apply to staff, students and contractors entering the school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Physical distancing of 2 metres to be maintained with visitors (where possible)</li> <li>- All visitors are to wear a mask</li> <li>- Visits are arranged to ensure that congregation of parents in waiting areas is by invited them to remain in their car until the teacher is ready to meet them (depending on space available).</li> <li>- Implementation of alternative means of communication other than face to face meetings</li> </ul>
Reception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reception area screened off with front door locking at 9am each morning.</li> <li>- Visitors will buzz at the front door to be allowed in for their appointment</li> <li>- Visitors required to give details for sign in book and Covid tracking log</li> </ul>
Breaks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All students and staff at breaks and before eating are required to clean their hand</li> <li>- Students will eat their lunches in base classrooms and then go outside as soon as possible</li> <li>- Staff will have staggered breaks to avoid congestion</li> </ul>
Hallways / Stairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Requirement for staff and students when passing another person in a corridor or stairwell, that they are required to avoid any physical contact or participation in informal group discussions.</li> <li>- In the event of a narrow corridor one person to use it at a time where possible</li> <li>- At the prefabs, particularly for LS5 and LS6, and similarly at LS2 and LS3 in main building, one class to move before the other. Students to wait at bottom for teacher to arrive to assist with social distancing and hand sanitising upon entry and exit to classroom.</li> <li>- Walk on the right-hand side of corridors when moving around the school</li> </ul>
Yard / Outside Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students and staff are required to adhered to relevant social distancing requirements when engaging or returning from break times.</li> <li>- Students and staff required to perform hand hygiene before and after outdoor activities</li> <li>- Minimising the sharing of equipment and requiring its cleaning before and after use.</li> </ul>
Specialised Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students are encouraged to have their own equipment required for specialised subjects</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shared electronics such as keyboards are required to be cleaned before and after use in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.</li> <li>- Hand washing facilities have been implemented instead of hand sanitisers in classrooms / kitchen / labs etc. where an open flame may exist, in order to mitigate against the risk of injury / burns to staff or student.</li> </ul>
<p>School / Sporting Related Activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supervisors should observe students for symptoms, and they should ask parents to declare that their children are symptom free.</li> <li>- Social (Physical) distancing, hand hygiene and good respiratory etiquette should be observed by all (students, parents, coaches and spectators).</li> <li>- Conducting an up to date risk assessment in relation to the particular activity or sport so as to identify what additional measures are required to reduce / mitigate the risks.</li> <li>- Requirement that no person (student, parent, coach or spectator) should attend an event if unwell or any members of their household are unwell with symptoms consistent with Covid-19.</li> <li>- Households to bring their own household members to the event and not share transport to or from the venue</li> <li>- Requirement that parents and students wait in the car or outside the venue until just before the beginning of a practice, warm-up, or game, instead of congregating with other children prior to the start.</li> <li>- Appointment of Covid-19 officer at events</li> <li>- Requirement for good hand hygiene, and respiratory etiquette.</li> <li>- Avoiding the sharing of water-bottles. Each student is required to bring their own water-bottle clearly labelled with their name</li> <li>- Requirement to maintain social distancing of 2 metres where possible when students are not playing such as when watching from the side-line etc.</li> <li>- Cleaning and disinfecting of any shared equipment before, during and after all sessions/activities</li> <li>- Completion of contact tracing log at events where possible (Students, teachers, coaches, trainers, parents / guardians etc.)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pre-Check at entrance – person belonging to a risk group / contact with infected persons, / symptomatic</li> <li>- Keeping the minimum distancing rule for wind ensembles to reduce the risk to very low.</li> <li>- Avoiding the draining of condensation in instruments onto the floor</li> <li>- Disposing of all draining in a collection container or absorbent blotting paper</li> </ul>

<p>Choir/Music Practices / Performances</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wind players should not blow through the instruments to clean them</li> <li>- Wind instruments to be cleaned in separate rooms away from the teaching or rehearsal setting where possible.</li> <li>- In the event of contact with condensation or with the interior of the instrument (e.g., horn), great care must be taken to ensure a thorough hand hygiene protocol is followed</li> <li>- Educators and pupils are advised to wear mouth-nose mask protection in individual lessons, when they are not playing</li> <li>- Wind ensembles - Wind ensembles can have different numbers of players depending on their instrumentation. The number of players must always correspond to the currently applicable regulations on group sizes.</li> <li>- Even with smaller ensembles, a minimum distance of 2 meters feet should be maintained</li> <li>- Rehearsal rooms to be as large as possible</li> <li>- In the summer season, weather permitting the question of playing outdoors to be considered</li> <li>- Face and nose protection to be worn during individual lessons when students are singing</li> </ul> <p>In order to reduce the risk of infection from aerosols in the choral setting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- General risk reduction is the personal entrance screening</li> <li>- Mouth and nose mask protection can be worn</li> <li>- Singing in very large rooms, such as concert halls or church sanctuaries, appears to be most favourable.</li> <li>- Choirs required to observe the general spacing rule for social distancing</li> <li>- Choir required to where face masks even on choir break</li> <li>- No hand contact or contact with surfaces by choir when on break (e.g., by sharing music, etc.).</li> <li>- Requirements for thorough hand washing before and after choir practice</li> <li>- Students and teachers to avoid touching the face and rubbing the eyes during choir practice</li> <li>- Sneezing and coughing should be avoided, if possible, and caught in the crook of the elbow / tissue</li> </ul>
<p>Poor Hand Hygiene</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information provided to staff and students as to why hand hygiene is so important, when to wash their hands and how to wash their hands.</li> <li>- The promotion of good hand hygiene and the display Hand Hygiene Posters throughout the school.</li> <li>- Provision for hand hygiene through hand washing or the use of a hand sanitiser.</li> <li>- Provision of hand sanitiser dispensers at entry and exit points of schools and classrooms.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provision of access to hand washing facilities after activities that are likely to soil hands for example gardening or certain sporting activities as hand sanitiser does not work on dirty hands.</li> <li>- Provision of social distancing when using hand hygiene facilities including wash hand basins so as to avoid congregation of people waiting to use wash hand basins and hand sanitiser.</li> <li>- Provision of adequate hand washing facilities to meet the needs of the school population</li> <li>- Topping up of hand sanitisers, soap dispenser so as to encourage school population to use them</li> <li>- Displaying of posters adjacent to washing facilities demonstrating hand washing techniques</li> </ul>
Toilets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Toilets, wash hand basins and surrounding areas cleaned daily and whenever there is visible soiling.</li> <li>- Cleaning staff inspection of toilets and hand washing facilities at regular intervals</li> </ul>
Cleaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cleaning staff received updated information and training in relation to cleaning and sanitising areas in relation to Covid-19 virus.</li> <li>- Cleaning schedules have been increased in relation to the cleaning of high use areas / surfaces in the school</li> <li>- Employees and students are required to clean and sanitise shared equipment at the commencement and termination of their use.</li> <li>- Cleaning checklist provided for church cleaner for over weekends. Cleaner to sign this each week.</li> <li>- When students move from base classrooms to option rooms, desks and chairs to be cleaned, cleaning packs in each room.</li> </ul>