



## **School Covid Response Plan**

The Board of Management of Woodland NS aims to facilitate the resumption of school-based teaching and learning and the safe return to the workplace of staff and pupils. 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 school facility and the applicable controls are outlined in this document.

### **Induction Training**

All staff will undertake and confirm completion of Covid-19 Induction Training prior to returning to the school 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 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.

### **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 online or from the principal. A RTW form should be completed and returned at least 3 days 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 school to facilitate the staff member's return to the school facility. There are some school staff who may be unable to return to school. Current public health guidelines have identified these people as being in groups who are defined as being at very high risk. This will be updated in line with public health advice.

People at very high risk (extremely vulnerable): 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.

### **Lead Worker Representative**

The Return to Work Protocol provides for the appointment of a Lead Worker Representative (LWR) and an Assistant Lead Worker Representative in Woodland NS. The LWR and assistant LWR will work in collaboration with the Principal and the Board of 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.

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 responsibility 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, pupils or others he/she should contact the lead worker(s) who will engage with the principal/BOM.

### **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
- 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
- Keep up to date with the latest COVID-19 public health advice;

- In conjunction with school management, promote good hygiene practices such as washing hands regularly and maintaining good respiratory etiquette along with maintaining social distancing in accordance with public health advice
- Assist 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
- In conjunction with school management, monitor adherence to measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19
- Conduct regular reviews of safety measures; COVID-19 Response Plan for the safe and sustainable reopening of primary and special schools
- 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.

### **The role of the Assistant LWR**

- assist the LWR in their duties as set out above
- deputise as LWR where the LWR is absent

Name of Lead Worker Representative	Majella Gallagher	Contact No.	
Name of Assistant Lead Worker Representative	Martina Harkin	Contact No.	

All staff, pupils, 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.

### **Signage**

Woodland NS will display signage outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID19 and signage to support good hand and respiratory hygiene. The Department of Education will provide printed posters to schools, with age appropriate key health messages – hand washing, sneeze and cough etiquette etc. Woodland NS will display these posters in prominent areas such as offices, corridors, staffroom area, classrooms and toilets.

### **Health and Safety Risk Assessment**

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment. A risk assessment has been completed to identify the control measures required to mitigate

the risk of COVID-19 in school settings and is attached to our Safety Statement. First Aid will be administered by the SNA/Teacher on yard duty ensuring that it is kept within the Zone. Schools should also review their existing risk assessments to consider any new risks that arise due to the school's COVID-19 Response Plan. Any changes to the school's current risk assessments should also be documented and incorporated into the school safety statement. First Aid/Emergency Procedure The standard First Aid/emergency procedure shall continue to apply in school. 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.

### **Access to School and Contact Tracing Log**

Access to the school building will be restricted to essential purposes and limited to those who have obtained prior approval from the principal. 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 Contact Tracing Log of those entering the school facilities will be maintained and must be completed in order to access the building. Woodland NS maintains a log of staff and pupil contacts also. Woodland NS will maintain and process such data gathered from the Contact Tracing Log in compliance with the GDPR and the Data Protection Acts.

### **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, pupils, 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, pupils, 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.

#### **In order to minimise the risk of introduction of COVID-19 into our school we will:**

- Promote awareness of COVID-19 symptoms
- Advise staff and pupils that have symptoms not to attend school, to phone their doctor and to follow HSE guidance on self-isolation

- Advise staff and pupils not to attend school if they have been identified by the HSE as a contact for person with COVID-19 and to follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement
- Advise staff and pupils that develop symptoms at school to bring this to the attention of the Principal promptly
- Ensure that staff and pupils know the protocol for managing a suspected case of COVID-19 in school
- Everyone entering the school building needs to perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser
- Visitors to the school during the day should be by prior arrangement and should be received at a specific contact point
- Physical distancing (of 2m) should be maintained between staff and visitors where possible

### **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

If you have any of the above symptoms you should not attend school but instead you should phone your doctor and to follow HSE guidance on self-isolation

Should you develop any of the above symptoms at school you must bring this to the attention of the Principal promptly.

### **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.

## **Hand Hygiene**

Staff and pupils should understand why hand hygiene is important as well as when and how to wash their hands. Woodland NS will promote good hygiene and display posters throughout the schools on how to wash your hands.

Posters displaying hand washing techniques and promoting hand washing are placed on walls adjacent to washing facilities. Hand sanitiser is also available in each classroom.

## **Frequency of Hand Hygiene**

Pupils 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.

## **Protocol for Hand Washing**

Children line up with appropriate social distancing.

## **Physical Distancing**

Physical distancing will be applied in a practical way to recognise that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on this issue. Care will 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 pupils and it is not appropriate that they would always be expected to do so where this could have a detrimental impact on the pupil i.e. if a child sustains an injury and requires first aid. However, where possible staff should maintain a minimum of 1 metre distance and where possible 2 metres. Staff should also take measures to avoid close contact at face to face level such as remaining standing rather than sitting beside/crouching down where possible.

Physical distancing falls into two categories:

- Increasing separation
- Decreasing interaction

## **Increasing separation**

The guidance documents provided by the Department of Education on optimal school layout has been used in Woodland NS to increase separation to the greatest degree possible.

Classroom layouts are in line with the layouts provided by the Department of Education who state that these are

*‘in accordance with the public health advice, and assumes Room is clear of any unnecessary furniture/shelves etc....’*

In line with the recommendations of the Department in our classrooms the teacher's desk will be at least 1m and where possible 2m away from pupil desks.

### **Decreasing interaction**

The Department states that the risk of infection may be reduced by structuring pupils and their teachers into Class Bubbles (i.e. a class grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible) and discrete groups or "Pods" within those class bubbles, to the extent that this is practical.

To this end we have arranged our classes as individual classes and within each class there will be discrete pods with 1metre distance between individual pods within the class and between individuals in the pod, whenever possible.

Generally speaking the objective is to limit contact and sharing of common facilities between people in different classes (and Pods within those Classes) as much as possible, rather than to avoid all contact between Pods, as the latter will not always be possible. The aim of the system within the school is that children in a class grouping mix only with their own class from arrival at school in the morning until departure at the end of the school day. The Pods within their class is an additional measure to limit the extent of close contact within the class. Pod sizes will be kept as small as is likely to be reasonably practical in the specific classroom context. To the greatest extent possible, pupils will consistently be in the same class although this will neither be possible nor in the best interests of pupils at all times.

Different classes will have separate breaks and lunch times and will have separate areas in the yard. Sharing educational material between Pods will be avoided/minimised where possible. Staff members who move from class to class should be limited as much as possible.

### **Additional measures to decrease interaction include:**

- Limit interaction on arrival and departure and in hallways and other shared areas
- Social physical contact (hand to hand greetings, hugs) will not be permitted
- Where pupils need to move about within the classroom to perform activities (access to a shared resource) it will be organized to the greatest degree possible to minimize congregation at the shared resource.
- Staff and pupils should avoid sharing of personal items.
- Encourage pupils to avoid behaviours that involve hand to mouth contact (putting pens/pencils in the mouth).
- 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 school**

#### **School drop off/collection**

Arrangements for dropping off/collecting pupils are arranged to encourage physical distancing of 2m where possible. Walking/cycling to school should be encouraged as much as possible. Arrangements should be made to maintain a distance of 2m between parents and guardians and between parents and guardians and school staff. Aim of any arrangements is to avoid congregation of people where physical distancing may not be respected.

Staggered drop off/pick up times will be in operation within the school. This is to avoid pupils congregating at entrance doors to the school.

### **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. We will have a no hand-shaking policy and staff will maintain 2 metre physical distancing at the beginning and end of the school day.

Physical distancing will be observed between staff members within the staff rooms through the use of staggered breaks etc. Staff areas are set up in the staff room and in the small hall.

### **Yard/Supervision**

The Department of Education states that the *'risk of transmission from contact with outside surfaces or play areas is low.'* Here in Woodland NS we have adjusted play time/outdoor activities with staggered break times to minimise crowding at the entrance and exits and to avoid classes mixing with other classes in the yard. According to the Department it is not possible to maintain physical distancing when pupils in primary or special schools play together outdoors, but in so far as practical it is helpful to keep to consistent groups which we will do. Children will perform hand hygiene before and after outdoor activities.

### **Ventilation**

The Department has published guidance setting out the practical steps for good ventilation. In line with this guidance, windows will be open as fully as possible when classrooms are not in use e.g. during break times and partially open when classrooms are in use. Care will be taken to ensure windows/doors are not opening in a manner which could cause injury to children outside. The Department will also issue CO2 monitors to enhance the efficacy of our ventilation matters. These will be used in line with the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

### **Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in Woodland NS**

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.

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 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
- Administering first aid

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

### **Face Coverings / Masks**

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 coverings 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.

In childcare and educational settings, the implementation of mandatory face-covering usage is challenging, as it is known that children will have a lower tolerance and ability to use the face covering properly, and use of face-coverings by teachers and staff caring for very young children may cause undue stress to the children.

It is not recommended that children attending primary school wear face-coverings.

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.

Cloth face coverings are not suitable for children under the age of 13 and anyone who

- Has trouble breathing
- Is unconscious or incapacitated
- Is unable to remove it without help
- Has special needs to who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the face covering.

Staff are reminded not to touch the face covering and to wash or sanitise their hands before putting on and after taking off the face covering.

### **Gloves**

The use of disposable gloves in the school by pupils or staff is not generally appropriate but may be necessary for 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 be used for intimate care needs or by staff assigned to cleaning an area where a suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19 was present.

## **Impact of COVID-19 on certain school activities**

### **Choir / Music performance**

Music practices/performances involving wind instruments will only be held in rooms which are well ventilated and where social distancing between performers is maintained,

### **Sport Activities**

Schools should refer to the HPSC guidance on Return to Sport.

### **Shared Equipment**

#### **Toys**

All toys will be cleaned on a regular basis for example weekly. This will remove dust and dirt that can harbour germs. Toys that are visibly dirty or contaminated with blood or bodily fluids will be taken out of use immediately for cleaning or disposal. When purchasing toys we will choose ones that are easy to clean and disinfect (when necessary). If cloth or soft toys are used they should be machine washable. Jigsaws, puzzles and toys that young pupils to those with special educational needs may be inclined to put into their mouths should be capable of being washed and disinfected. All play equipment will be checked for signs of damage for example breaks or cracks. If they cannot be repaired or cleaned they will be discarded. Clean toys and equipment should be stored in a clean container or clean cupboard. The manufacturer's instructions should always be followed.

At this time soft modelling materials and play dough where used should be for individual use only.

#### **Cleaning Procedure for Toys**

Wash the toy in warm soapy water, using a brush to get into crevices

Rinse the toy in clean water

Thoroughly dry the toy

Some hard plastic toys may be suitable for cleaning in the dishwasher

Toys that cannot be immersed in water that is electronic or wind up should be wiped with a damp cloth and dried

In some situations toys/equipment may need to be disinfected following cleaning for example: toys/equipment that pupils place in their mouths.

#### **Art**

Where possible pupils should 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.

## **Musical Equipment/Instruments**

To the greatest extent possible, instruments should not be shared between pupils and if sharing is required, the instruments should be cleaned between uses.

## **Library Policy**

Where practical pupils 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. Pupils should be encouraged to perform hand hygiene after using any shared item.

## **Shared Sports Equipment**

Minimise equipment sharing and clean shared equipment between uses by different people.

## **Hygiene and Cleaning in Schools**

The school will be cleaned at least once per day. Additional cleaning if available will be focused on frequently touched surfaces: door handles, hand rails, chairs/arm rests, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities.

All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area. Staff are required to 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 school facility. Staff must provide, use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.)

## **Cleaning/Disinfecting rooms where a pupil/staff member with suspected Covid-19 was present**

The room should be cleaned as soon as practicably possible.

Once the room is vacated the room should not be reused until the room has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry.

Person cleaning the room should avoid touching their face while they are cleaning and should wear 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.

If a pupil or staff diagnosed with COVID-19 spent time in a communal area like the sensory room or if they used the toilet or bathroom facilities, then the areas should be cleaned with household detergent followed by a disinfectant as soon as is practically possible.

## **Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19**

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

A designated isolation area has been identified within the school building. The designated isolation area is behind a closed door and away from other staff and pupils.

If a staff member/pupil 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 pupil, the parents/guardians should be contacted immediately
- Isolate the person and have a procedure in place to accompany the individual to the designated isolation area via the isolation route, keeping at least 2m away from the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2m 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 pupil 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 who will call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home
- Facilitate the person presenting with symptoms remaining in isolation if they cannot immediately go home and facilitate them calling their doctor. The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. Advice should be given to the person presenting with symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bag provided
- If the person is well enough to go home, arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible and advise them to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used
- If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a Covid-19 suspect
- Carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery
- Arrange for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved

The HSE will inform any staff/parents who have come into close contact with a diagnosed case via the contact tracing process. The HSE will contact all relevant persons where a

diagnosis of COVID-19 is made. The instructions of the HSE should be followed and staff and pupil confidentiality is essential at all times.

### **Special Educational Needs**

Additional considerations for those with Special Educational Needs

For children with special educational needs (SEN) maintaining physical distancing in many instances will not be practical or appropriate to implement. The focus should therefore be on emphasising that parents/guardians should have a heightened awareness of signs, symptoms or changes in baseline which suggests illness/COVID-19 infection and where symptoms are present children should not attend school. Similarly staff should be aware of their responsibility not to attend work if they develop signs or symptoms of respiratory illness.

### **Hand hygiene**

Children who are unable to wash their hands by themselves should be assisted to clean their hands using soap and water or a hand sanitiser if their hands are visibly clean.

### **Equipment**

Some children may have care needs (physical or behavioural) which requires the use of aids and appliances and/or medical equipment for example toileting aids, moving and handling equipment, respiratory equipment. The following points guide the cleaning of such equipment:

- Equipment used to deliver care should be visibly clean
- Care equipment should be cleaned in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions. Cleaning is generally achieved using a general purpose detergent and warm water
- Equipment that is used on different children must be cleaned and, if required, disinfected immediately after use and before use by another child e.g. toileting aids
- If equipment is soiled with body fluids:

First clean thoroughly with detergent and water

Then disinfect by wiping with a freshly prepared solution of disinfectant

Rinse with water and dry.

### **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 COVID-19 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 COVID19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to facilitate their safe return to the workplace.

- New staff 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 practices.
- Coordinate 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.
- Follow the HSE guidance if they are identified as a close contact.
- If they have travelled outside of Ireland; in such instances staff are advised to consult and follow latest Government advice in relation to foreign travel.
- If they develop any symptoms of COVID-19 whilst within the school facility, they should adhere to the procedure outlined above.
- Keep informed of the updated advice of the public health authorities and comply with same.
- Cooperate with any public health personnel and their school for contact tracing purposes and follow any public health advice given in the event of a case or outbreak in their school
- Undergo any COVID-19 testing that may be required as part of mass or serial testing as advised by Public Health

### **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.

### **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'.

The EAS is a self-referral service where employees have access to 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. The service is also available via SMS, WhatsApp, e-mail, live chat and call back request. All points of contact for the service are qualified, accredited and experienced mental health professionals.

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 is available which offers access to podcasts, blogs, live chats and videos on topics around wellbeing and mental health, family life, exercise and nutrition. E-Learning programmes across mental health, sleep and a range of wellbeing topics are 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. Spectrum.Life also provides a series of webinars and presentations to promote wellbeing in schools.