

COVID-19 Policy Statement

Naas CNS is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our staff and a safe learning environment for all our pupils. To ensure that, we have developed the following COVID-19 Response Plan. The BOM and all school staff are responsible for the implementation of this plan and a combined effort will help contain the spread of the virus. We will:

- continue to monitor our COVID-19 response and amend this plan in consultation with our staff
- provide up to date information to our staff and pupils 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
- inform all staff and pupils of essential hygiene and respiratory etiquette and physical distancing requirements
- adapt the school to facilitate physical distancing as appropriate in line with the guidance and direction of the Department of Education
- keep a contact log to help with contact tracing
- ensure staff engage with the induction / familiarisation briefing provided by the Department of Education
- implement the agreed procedures to be followed in the event of someone showing symptoms of COVID-19 while at school
- provide instructions for staff and pupils to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during school time
- implement cleaning in line with Department of Education advice

All school staff will be consulted on an ongoing basis and feedback is encouraged on any concerns, issues or suggestions.

This can be done through the Lead Worker Representative(s), who will be supported in line with the agreement between the Department and education partners.

Signed: 

Date: 26/08/2020

Naas CNS COVID-19 Response Plan

Planning and Preparing for Return to School

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

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

Before reopening Naas CNS for the 2020/21 school year we 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, pupils, parents and others as required;
- Ensured that staff have reviewed the training materials provided by the Department of Education
- Provided staff with access to the Return to Work (RTW) form
- Identified a Lead Worker representative
- Displayed posters and other signage to prevent introduction and spread of COVID-19
- Made the necessary changes to the school or classroom layout if necessary to support the redesign of classrooms to support physical distancing
- Removed unnecessary clutter to facilitate ongoing cleaning of the school taking into account the importance of having educational materials to create a stimulating learning environment;
- Updated the health and safety risk assessment
- Made necessary arrangements to limit access to the school to necessary visitors and maintain records of contacts to the school
- Reviewed the school buildings to check the following:
 - Does the water system need flushing at outlets following low usage to prevent Legionella disease;
 - Has school equipment and mechanical ventilation been checked for signs of deterioration or damage before being used again;
 - Have bin collections and other essential services resumed.

Lead Worker Representative

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

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
 - Report any issues of concern immediately to school management and keep records of such issues and actions taken to rectify them;
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- 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.

Name(s) of lead worker representative:	Contact details:
Múinteoir Miriam	045 875 311
Múinteoir Aislín (Deputy)	045 875 311

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.

Control Measures - To prevent Introduction and Spread of COVID-19 in Naas CNS

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.

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 to self-isolate or restrict their movements at home if they display any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 and contact their family doctor to arrange a test.
- Advise staff and pupils not to return to or attend school in the event of the following:
 - if they are identified by the HSE as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19
 - if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus
 - 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.
- 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. They are:

- ✓ High temperature
- ✓ Cough
- ✓ Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- ✓ Loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste

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.

Naas CNS will promote good hygiene and display posters throughout the school 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 so as to avoid congregation of people waiting to use wash hand basins and hand sanitisers.

There is a requirement for access to hand washing facilities after activities that are likely to soil hands, for example playing outside or certain sporting activities as hand sanitiser does not work on dirty hands.

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Hand sanitiser dispensers will be deployed at exit and entry points of Naas CNS and at entry points to all classrooms and Learning Support rooms and care will be taken to clean up any hand sanitiser spills to prevent risks of falls.

Wash hand basins, warm running water, liquid soap and hand drying facilities are provided in all toilets and kitchen area.

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.

Physical Distancing

The DES guidelines recognise that a common sense approach is needed in our Primary schools. To that end, every effort will be made to limit interaction within classrooms, to limit contact between class groups and to limit the sharing of common facilities.

- The children and their teachers will work in Class Bubbles. A Class Bubble is a grouping which stays apart from other classes as much as possible. The aim of the system within the school is that class groupings mix only with their own class from arrival at school in the morning until the children go home at the end of the school day.
- Within each class the children will be further divided into pods, with a minimum distance of 1 meter being maintained between pods.
- Where possible staff will maintain a minimum of 1m distance and where possible 2m. They will also take measures to avoid close contact at face to face level such as remaining standing rather than sitting beside/crouching down.

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.

Changes to Classroom and School Layout and to School Routines.

Classrooms will be laid out in pods of up to 6 students and there will be 1m distance between pods.

The teacher's desk will be at least 1m and where possible 2m away from pupil desks.

It is recognised that younger children are unlikely to maintain physical distancing indoors. Therefore achieving this recommendation in the first four years of primary or special schools, is not a pre-requisite to reopening a primary or special school for all pupils.

Entry and Exit to School

All children will be left at the front of the school building. No adults are to accompany the children to their entry points.

Junior Infants to 2nd Class children will walk down the right hand side of the building and enter through the doors at the back of the building.

3rd Class to 6th Class will use the doors beside the infant yard as normal.

Drop off and Collection of Students

Morning Time

Students who walk to school are asked to arrive **at 9am and no earlier**. They will go straight to their class and take their allocated seat.

Students who travel to school by car should arrive **at 9:15am**. There will be no parking on site. We will be operating a drop and go system. Students will go straight to their class and take their allocated seat.

Students who travel by bus will go straight to their class and take their allocated seat.

Evening time

Junior Infants will finish at 12 for the first two weeks and two days and then at 2pm. The children will be brought to the front yard for collection. There will be no parking on site.

Senior Infants will finish at 2pm and will be brought to the front yard for collection. There will be no parking on site.

Senior Students

Students who travel by bus will board the bus in their class bubbles at **2:50pm**.

Students who are walking will depart at 2:55. Parents meeting their children should not gather around the school building.

Students who are being collected by car will depart at **3.00pm** in their class bubbles when the buses have left to avoid congestion. **It is very important that parents collecting their children in cars are not on site before 3pm.**

Collection of Children during the School Day

If an adult has to collect a child during the school day, the following arrangements will apply

- When the adult arrives at the school, they should phone the office.
- The child will be brought from their class to the adult by a member of staff.
- No adult should enter the school building, unless invited to do so i.e. by prior appointment.

We ask for your co-operation with these times as it will mean that the numbers congregating on school grounds at any one time will be minimised.

Observe Social Distancing at all times.

Break Times

We will be operating staggered break times as follows:

Junior Infants to 2nd Class 10:25 – 10:40

3rd Class to 6th Class 10:40 – 10:55

Junior Infants to 2nd Class 12:00 – 12:30

3rd Class to 6th Class 12:30 – 1:00

We will be dividing our yard space up into 5 areas. Each class will stay in their yard area and remain with their bubble.

Team Teaching / Special Education Teachers

SET Teachers will be assigned to class bubbles as far as possible to minimise interaction with different classes.

- Where a support teacher is working alongside a class teacher in a classroom, both teachers must be mindful of maintaining social distance from one another.
- The tables and chairs in SET rooms will be wiped clean in between different pupils or small groups attending.

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. We will observe our usual practice of keeping to the right when on the stairs and in the corridors.

Additional Measures to Limit Interactions

Children will go straight to their classrooms from the yard and will not congregate in the corridors or hallways.

While we will all be delighted to see each other again, hand shaking and hugging will not be allowed.

Doors and Windows

Where practical, all internal doors will be left open to minimise hand contact with common surfaces.

To ensure that classrooms are well ventilated, windows will be kept open as often as possible, and will be opened while children are taking breaks in the playground.

Toilets

Each class will use the toilets assigned to their classroom. Soap dispensers / paper towels and warm water is available in all toilets. Encourage your child in the correct hand washing technique.

Lunches

Mams and Dads must make sure that children bring their lunches to school to avoid adults having to come to the school during the day. Please remind your children not to share their food or drinks with other children.

Children will eat their lunches at their tables as per our usual practice.

Please ensure that your child can open the lunch you provide without any assistance from others.

Books, Copies, Pencils etc.

Children should use their own books, pens, pencils etc and should not share with other pupils.

Office

Messages for teachers / school can be sent to the office email admin@naascns.ie or phone 045875311.

As far as possible, staff members should not enter the Office areas and should speak with the Secretary on the phone from their classroom.

Staff

All staff members should maintain a physical distance of 2 meters when they are not engaged in teaching. If 2 meters cannot be maintained in staff groups, face coverings should be worn. Staffroom will be used according to break times. Staff meetings will be held in P.E. hall or on Microsoft Teams to facilitate physical distancing.

Staff members should bring their own cups, bottles, cutlery etc to school and avoid sharing utensils in the staffroom as far as possible.

Photocopying

Teachers only: Sanitise before and after use. Hand sanitiser will be provided in the staff room.

Children who should not attend school

If your child is in one of the following categories, they should not attend school –

- Children who have been diagnosed with Covid 19 who have been informed by their doctor/HSE to self isolate.
- Children who have been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with Covid 19.
- Children who have a suspected case of Covid 19 and the outcome of the test is pending.
- Children who have been in contact with a person who has a suspected case of Covid 19 and the outcome of the test is pending.
- Children with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school.
- Children who have returned home after travelling abroad and must self isolate for a period of 14 days.
- Children who are generally unwell. Please see the HSE guidance re symptoms at <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/covid-19-translated-resources/>

Personal Equipment

- In so far as possible, it is requested that children from Infants to 6th class will bring their own pens, pencils, colours, rubbers etc, to school in their own pencil case to avoid the sharing of equipment.
- It is further requested that all items have the child's name on them for ease of identification.

Shared Equipment

By necessity, some classroom equipment needs to be shared including tablets, laptops and the equipment used for structured activities and play in Infant classrooms. Cleaning of such shared equipment with wipes or other cleaning products will take place at regular intervals to minimise the risk of infection.

P.E.

Where possible PE should take place outdoors and use of equipment should be confined to class groupings. If PE hall is used by class groupings, common touch points should be cleaned at intervals throughout the school day.

The Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Staff members are not required to wear PPE. However, PPE will need to be used occasionally or constantly due to the nature of certain work activities or work areas. Visors and face masks and gloves are available for all staff.

Medical Grade Masks

Naas CNS will provide medical grade masks in the EN16483 category to all SNAs and teachers.

Masks

The children are not required to wear masks or face coverings.

Signage

The school will display signage outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID- 19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene.

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) as outlined previously.

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. Where cleaning of aids and appliances is carried out in the school it is recommended that a cleaning schedule is provided, detailing when and how the equipment is cleaned and the cleaning products to be used in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions.

The following points can guide the development of such cleaning schedule:

- 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.

Dealing with a suspected case of COVID 19

Pupils should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of Covid 19. If a pupil displays symptoms of Covid 19 while in the building, the following procedures will be implemented:

- Parents/Guardians will be contacted immediately – please ensure that your contact details are up to date on Aladdin.
- The child will be accompanied to the designated isolation area (The Principals Office) via the isolation route by a member of staff. The staff member will remain at least 2 meters away from the symptomatic child and will also make sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 meters from the symptomatic child at all times.
- A mask will be provided for the child presenting with symptoms. He/she should wear the mask if in a common area with other people or while exiting the premises.

- The Parent/Guardian will be contacted to take the child home.
- The child presenting with symptoms should be advised to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and to put the tissue in the waste bin provided.
- If the child is well enough to go home, the school will arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible, and advise them to inform their GP 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, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick child has some COVID 19 symptoms.
- Arrangements will be made for appropriate cleaning of the isolation area and work areas involved.

The HSE will inform any staff / parents who have come in 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. School staff are encouraged to download the HSE COVID-19 tracker app to assist Public Health for contract tracing purposes. Both in and out of the school setting.

Impact of a Suspected or Confirmed Case of Covid 19 in a Class

If the school is notified that a person in your child's class has a suspected or confirmed case of Covid 19:

- The parents of all children in the class will be notified.
- Public health advice will be sought and followed.

Access to School and Contact Log

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

A detailed sign in/sign out log of those entering the school facilities will be maintained.

Hygiene and Cleaning

The school will be cleaned at **least once per day**. Cleaning will be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, hand rails, chairs/arm rests, communal eating areas, any shared materials, sink and toilet facilities.

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 school facility.

Staff must 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 will be cleaned as soon as practicably possible.

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

Disinfection only works on things that are clean. When disinfection is required it is always as well as cleaning.

Person assigned to cleaning 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 a canteen, play area or if they used the toilet or bathroom facilities, then the areas should be cleaned with household detergent followed by a disinfectant (as outlined in the HPSC interim health advice) as soon as is practically possible.

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. Staff are requested to confirm (verbally or in writing) that the details in the pre-return to work form remain unchanged following subsequent periods of closures such as school holidays.
- 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.
- 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.
- Not to return to or attend school in the event of the following:
 - if they are identified as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19
 - if they live with someone who has symptoms of the virus
 - 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

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 staff 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).

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. A series of weekly webinars and live talks to promote staff wellbeing in schools is current available on the wellbeing portal.

*This document is a working document and it will be reviewed / updated and adjusted in light of advice from the Department of Education and Skills, H.S.E. and the developing situation with COVID 19
February 2021*