



Health and Safety Control of COVID-19 Policy for students St Mac Dara's Community College.

Adopted 5 Aug 2021 for 2021/2022

Introduction

Under the Safety Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, the board of management/ETB of ST Mac Dara's Community College is required to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of all employees of the school. The board is further required to manage and conduct the school in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that individuals at the place of work who are not employees, such as students, parents/guardians, visitors to the school, are not exposed to risks to their safety, health or welfare.

1. **This policy** is influenced by the need to minimise the risk of introduction of COVID-19 into the school community and to prevent its spread. Although it is acknowledged that no single action or set of actions will completely eliminate the risk of COVID-19 transmission, adherence to this policy will contribute to the reduction of that risk of transmission.

In accordance with this policy students are expected to comply with the standards of behaviour set out in this policy or as directed by the school to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19. The COVID-19 control measures are consistent with current advice from the HSE, the Health and Safety Authority,

the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Foreign Affairs and, as such, may be subject to change. Students and parents/guardians will be notified of any changes to the control measures.

Students are expected to comply with all directions from school staff in relation to the school's COVID-19 control measures. Any failure or refusal to comply with this policy or to follow instructions of school staff should be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

Parents/guardians are required to supply the school with a phone number/s of available person/s who can be contacted at all times and who will be available to collect a student from the school should the need arise.

2. Symptoms of COVID-19 Symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to symptoms of cold or flu. The most common symptoms are:

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath
- loss of sense of smell or taste

More information regarding the most up-to-date signs and symptoms of COVID-19 is available on the HSE website, <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>.

3. Standards of Behaviour expected of students to help prevent the introduction or spread of COVID - 19 in the school

Standards of Behaviour expected of students Students are expected to comply with any control measures directed by the school to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19, including, but not limited to:

- maintaining a social-distance of at least 1 metre and where possible, 2 metres, from other students and staff;
- wearing a face covering (applicable at post-primary level). All students at post-primary level, are required to wear a face covering subject to a limited number of exceptions set out in relevant Department of Education guidance. Face coverings must not contain any 3 Page | 3 slogans/logos/images that may cause upset or be deemed offensive to any member of the school community.
- performing hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser on entering the school.
- repeating hand-hygiene at regular intervals throughout the school day and when directed by school staff;
- maintaining good respiratory-hygiene. In this regard students should:
 - *cover nose/mouth with a tissue when coughing/sneezing and dispose of used tissue in waste bin and perform hand hygiene*

- *cough or sneeze into the inner elbow (upper sleeve) rather than into the hand, if no tissues are available.*
- *keep contaminated hands away from the eyes and nose o carry out hand hygiene after contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects/materials o not spit or deliberately cough or sneeze at or towards any other person in the school*
- *not sharing materials or stationery, such as pens, calculators, rulers, etc. with other students;*
- *not attending school for 14 days after returning from travel out of the country in line with Government guidelines for travel;*
- *not attending school if displaying COVID-19 like symptoms and remaining out of school for such period as is required in accordance with HSE/GP advice*
- *not attending school where tested positive for COVID-19 and remaining out of school for such period as is required in accordance with HSE/GP advice*
- *not attending school if identified by the HSE as a person who has been in contact with another person who has contracted COVID-19 and remaining out of school for such period as is required in accordance with HSE/GP advice;*
- *not attending school if a member of the student's household is displaying COVID-19 symptoms and remaining out of school for such period as is required in accordance with HSE/GP advice*
- *telling a teacher or other member of staff where a student feels unwell at school. In that regard the student will require to be collected from the school as soon as possible by a parent/guardian or a person designated by the parent/guardian for such purpose. o parents must ensure that the school has up-to-date contact details so that they can be contacted by the school if required.*
- *complying with any other such directions as advised by the DES and/or HSE and communicated to the school community. Note – schools should review the above list and adjust or add items where necessary having regard to its own particular circumstances Students should be aware that the above is a non-exhaustive list. Students are expected to follow all instructions from staff which aim to prevent the introduction COVID-19 into the school and minimise its spread.*

4. Failure to comply with the standards of behaviour

Failure by a student to comply with the standards of behaviour expected to help prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 will constitute a breach of the Code of Behaviour of St Mac Dara's Community College and s/he may be subject to sanction up to and including suspension or permanent exclusion. Any actions or sanctions taken in respect of alleged breaches of the code of behaviour will be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the school's code of behaviour, the requirements of the EWS Guidelines on Developing a Code of Behaviour and relevant requirements of the Education and Welfare Act 2000. Sanctions will be proportionate to the nature, seriousness and context of the behaviour.

A student engaging in aggressive, threatening or unacceptable behaviour that creates or increases the risk of COVID-19 infection for staff, other students or visitors to the school may be removed from class and, if necessary, from the school premises with immediate effect, pending any further action to be taken in accordance with the school's code of behaviour

5. Checklist for dealing with a suspected case of COVID-19

Each teacher/staff member will be required to manage a suspected case in line with the protocol and training.

A nominated member of the school management team will be responsible for ensuring that all aspects of the protocol to deal with suspected cases have been adhered to.

Isolation Area (see notes as above)

1. Have you identified a place that can be used as an isolation area, preferably with a door that can close?
Yes, Room A5.
2. The isolation area does not have to be a separate room but if it is not a room it should be 2m away from others in the room. **Understood Yes**
3. Is the isolation area accessible, including to staff and students with disabilities? **Yes**
4. Is the route to the isolation area accessible? **Yes**
5. Have you a contingency plan for dealing with more than one suspected case of COVID-19? **Yes, Boardroom, Office of DP, Office of PO.**
6. Are the following available in the isolation area(s)?
 - Tissues
 - Hand sanitiser
 - Disinfectant/wipes
 - Gloves/Masks
 - Waste Bags
 - Bins**Yes to all of the above.**

ISOLATING A PERSON

Are procedures in place to accompany the infected person to the isolation area, along the isolation route with physical distancing from them?

Yes, a member of the middle management team operating from room A5 will be discreetly called for to accompany an individual with suspected covid-19 to the isolation area.

The Employee Assistance Service, which is currently provided by Spectrum Life, is available as a supportive resource for employees. The free phone confidential helpline is 1800 411 057 and is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

7. Ventilation and CO2 Monitors for Aug 2021

Ventilation and CO2 monitors: Managing ventilation is just one of a suite of public health measures in place to keep our schools safe. Updated guidance for schools on Practical Steps for the Deployment of Good Ventilation Practices in Schools was provided at the end of May following the work of an expert group that carefully considered the role of ventilation in managing COVID-19. A copy of the guidance is published at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/ad236-guidanceon-ventilation-in-schools/> The overarching approach in the guidance is for schools to have windows open as fully as possible when classrooms are not in use (e.g. during break-times or lunch-times and also at the end of each school day) and partially open when classrooms are in use. The guidance outlines that Carbon Dioxide (CO2) monitors can play a part in providing a useful general indication that areas/rooms may not be adequately ventilated. They can enable occupants to become familiar with the impacts of activities, outdoor weather and window openings on levels of good ventilation. In this regard, the Department is procuring a number of portable monitors that will be distributed to schools in August and September – between 2 and 20 at primary level and between 20 and 35 at post-primary level depending on school size at an estimated overall cost of €4 million. This will ensure that a CO2 monitor will be available for use in every classroom in Ireland. The monitors are portable, simple to use, and will give a digital reading. The provision of portable CO2 monitors provides schools with the flexibility to focus their use to those rooms where most beneficial to inform strategies for optimising ventilation in the school.

the Department's website at <https://www.education.ie/en/Education-Staff/Services/Breaks-Leave/coronaviruscovid19/>

This has been circulated to all staff in St Mac Dara's Community College.

In advance of the 2021/22 school year, an employee who considers he/she is at very high risk of serious illness from contracting COVID-19 has been advised by the Department to submit a completed OHS COVID-19 Risk Assessment Questionnaire (available on the OHS website).

The OHS assessment process is detailed at paragraph 4.1 of Circular A pregnant employee who has any of the medical conditions as listed on the HSE website under 'Very high risk groups (extremely vulnerable)' should follow the process as detailed at paragraph 4.1 of Circular 0021/2021, with regard to a COVID-19 Health Risk Categorisation assessment. 0021/2021.

Where a teacher or SNA has a COVID-19 vaccination appointment during school hours, the absence will be treated in the same manner as other medical appointments. 8.2 In this regard, paragraph 1.3 of the Sick Leave Scheme as contained in Circular 0054/2019 for teachers and Circular 0060/2019 for SNAs refers. 'Sick Leave may be granted to a teacher or SNA who is unable to perform his/her duties - because of illness, injury or - when absent for the purpose of obtaining medical related services (e.g. Doctor/Dentist) provided such appointments could not have been arranged outside of regular working hours or working days.' 8.3 Similar to the Sick Leave Scheme, the employee should provide confirmation of the vaccination appointment. 8.4 Where an employee has side effects following the COVID-19 vaccination, resulting in absence from duty, the terms and conditions of the Sick Leave Scheme will apply.

15. Has the affected person been advised not to go to their GP's surgery or any pharmacy or hospital? **This will be our practice.**
16. Has the affected person been advised they must not use public transport? **This will be our practice.**
17. Has the affected person been advised to continue wearing the face mask until they reach home? **This will be our practice.**

FOLLOW UP

18. Have you carried out an assessment of the incident to identify any follow-up actions needed? **This will be our practice.**
19. Have you advised the LWR of the incident in accordance with the agreed protocol? **This will be our practice.**
20. Are you available to provide advice and assistance if contacted by the HSE? **Yes**

CLEANING

21. Have you taken the isolation area out-of-use until cleaned and disinfected? **This will be our practice.**
22. Have you made arrangements to clean and disinfect any classroom space where the staff or students were located? **This will be our practice and to do so discreetly, safeguarding the privacy of an individual with suspected symptoms of Covid-19.**
23. Have you arranged for cleaning and disinfection of the isolation area and any other areas involved, as soon as practical after the affected person has left the building? **This will be our practise.**
24. Have the cleaners been trained in dealing with contaminated areas and supplied with the appropriate PPE? We currently have contract cleaners on site who are trained in deep cleaning. *(It is intended to provide online training for college cleaning staff. Appropriate PPE is already available to our college through the national procurement process which schools can access in line with the guidance which will be provided shortly)*

The above checklist is taken from the Department of Education and Skills COVID-19 response plan for post primary schools, detailing our response to each Item on the checklist.

6. Working arrangements for Very High Risk Teachers and SNAs

COVID-19: Working Arrangements for Very High Risk Teachers and Special Needs Assistants and Pregnant Teachers and Special Needs Assistants employed in recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools - 2021/22 School Year. Please see:

The manager will wear a visor and face covering and stay 2 metres apart. On arrival at the isolation area, in the case of a student, parent/guardian will be contacted to come and collect their son/daughter. A request to contact their GP will be made, and arrangements for follow up information to be relayed to the Principal.

In the case of staff: a member of staff who is feeling unwell, will present to the Principal or a member of the Senior Management Team observing distancing and the wearing of a face covering. If well enough to drive, they will exit the building by the main door and drive home, advised to contact their GP and to update the Principal on the situation. Where a member of staff is unable to drive home for whatever reason, they will be directed to the isolation room, where arrangements will be made to contact a relative/friend to collect and bring them home. In the case of both students and staff before they return to school, they must be certified as covid-19 free from their doctor. Neither staff/students may use public transport to make their way home.

7. Are staff familiar with this procedure? **Yes**
8. Have others been advised to maintain a distance of at least 2m from the affected person at all times? (it is intended that this will be dealt with as part of DES online training) **Yes**
9. Is there a disposable mask to wear for the affected person while in the common area and when exiting the building? **Yes**

ARRANGING FOR THE AFFECTED PERSON TO LEAVE THE SCHOOL

10. Staff – have you established by asking them if the staff members feel well enough to travel home?
This will be our practice.
11. Student – have you immediately contacted their parents/guardians and arranged for them to collect their student? Under no circumstances can a student use public or school transport to travel home if they are a suspected case of COVID-19. **This will be our practice.**
12. The affected person should be advised to avoid touching other people, surfaces and objects. **This will be our practice.**
13. The affected person should be advised to cover their mouth and nose with disposable tissue(s) when they cough or sneeze, and to put the tissue in the bin. A pedal bin will be on site in the isolation area, and it will be our practice to so advise.
14. Has transport home or to an assessment centre been arranged if the affected person has been directed to go there by their GP? **Transport will be the responsibility of a parent/guardian on the case of a student and in the case of a member of staff, it will be the responsibility, if well enough, for the member of staff to drive home or if so advised to an assessment centre. In the event of a member of staff being unwell and unable to drive themselves, a person nominated by them will be contacted to collect and transport.**

Signed: Ramela Deuss Date: 5th Oct 2021
Chairperson Board of Management.

Signed: Derek Ward Date: 5 Oct 2021
Principal.

