



**Teachers' Union of Ireland**

**Frequently Asked Questions  
on the Re-opening of Post  
Primary Schools  
2021**

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## Infection Prevention and Control

### What Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) measures will be in place in my school in the 2021/2022 school year?

*The same IPC measures that were in place last year will remain in place this year e.g. social distancing, wearing of masks, hand hygiene, hand sanitising and cleaning regimes.*

*In addition this year, schools will be provided with CO<sub>2</sub> Monitors and, where necessary, Air Quality Cleaners.*

## Prior to returning to school

### What do I have to do before I return to school?

*You must complete a Return to Work (RTW) Form which will be available from your school/ETB. This completed form must be submitted to your school before you return to school.*

*Teachers must also confirm that their status has not changed following other periods of school closure or leave i.e. mid-term break or sick leave.*

### Must COVID-19 signage and sanitising stations still be in place in the school prior to our return?

*Yes.*

### Will training be provided to teachers on COVID-19 and related issues?

*Yes. The Department of Education (DE) has published training videos for use in post-primary schools. Training must be completed by newly appointed staff. The training videos address COVID-19 training for all school staff in post-primary schools. The links to all videos have been sent to your principal.*

*In addition, the DE has published posters (in English and Irish) for use in schools. These posters cover coughing etiquette, correct hand washing, wearing of masks, correct use of hand sanitisers, etc.*

### Will training be provided to new Lead Worker Representatives?

*Yes. Lead Worker Representative induction is mandatory for new LWRs.*

## COVID-19 Response Plan

### What is a COVID-19 Response Plan?

*A COVID-19 Response Plan is a document that school management is required to have in place and to update as necessary. It is a supportive tool for management to assist them in putting measures in place, at school level, to minimise the risk of COVID-19 spread in a school.*

*COVID-19 Response Plans were required for the 2020/21 academic year and must be updated prior to the new (2021/22) academic year.*

### Is my school required to have a COVID-19 Response Plan/Policy?

*Yes. A school must have a COVID-19 Response Plan/Policy. It must be in place prior to school re-opening and a copy must be forwarded to all teachers in the school and to the Lead Worker Representative/s.*

*The revised updated policy must be signed and dated by the Chairperson and Principal of the BOM/ETB.*

### Who was involved in designing the COVID-19 Response Plan?

*The plan was developed with input from:*

- *Public Health medical professionals*
- *the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC)*
- *the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation*
- *the Department of Health*
- *the Health and Safety Authority (HSA)*
- *the Department of Education*
- *the TUI and the ASTI*
- *the school management bodies*

## Lead Worker Representative (LWR)

### What is a Lead Worker Representative (LWR)?

*A Lead Worker Representative is a person, selected by staff, to assist school management to implement a range of measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in school.*

### Is a Lead Worker Representative the same as the Safety Representative?

*No. Both roles are separate although they may be undertaken by the same person.*

## **How many Lead Worker Representatives (LWRs) should my school have?**

*The number of LWRs a school has depends on the total number of staff in the school. Every school will appoint one Lead Worker Representative.*

*In schools with more than 40 staff (inclusive of teachers, SNAs, school secretaries, caretakers etc.), a second Lead Worker Representative will be appointed. Appointment by management follows selection by staff of the LWR/s, in accordance with a process that has been agreed at national level.*

## **I was a Lead Worker Representative (LWR) in my school last year. Does this mean I am automatically the LWR this year?**

*Not necessarily. A new selection procedure should take place in advance of the new school year. However, the person/s who undertook the role last year may undertake the role this year.*

## **Does a LWR have any legal responsibilities?**

*No. A Lead Worker Representative does not have any legal responsibilities in relation to COVID-19 measures other than those that apply to employees generally.*

## **Who selects the LWR?**

*There is a nationally agreed process that must be followed. The first step in the process requires school management to seek expressions of interest from all staff. If more people are interested in the position than there are LWR positions on offer, an election by all staff must take place.*

## **I have been selected by staff to be the Lead Worker Representative. What exactly do I do?**

*You are required to:*

- *Represent all staff in your school i.e. teachers, SNAs, school secretaries, caretakers*
- *Keep up-to-date with the latest COVID-19 public health advice*
- *Liaise and work with school management to ensure, insofar as is practicable, the safety, health and welfare of all staff in the school, including consulting on COVID-19 control measures implemented in schools*
- *Promote good hygiene practices*
- *Assist management to implement measures to suppress COVID-19 in the school*
- *Monitor, in conjunction with school management, compliance with measures introduced to prevent the spread of COVID-19*
- *Conduct safety reviews - including a walk around of the school at least twice a week - to ascertain if safety measures are being complied with*

- Report any concerns immediately to school management
- Keep records of any issues of concern
- Keep records of actions taken by school management to rectify concerns
- Consult with school management on the school's COVID-19 Response Plan
- Consult with colleagues on all matters relating to COVID-19 in school
- Make representations to school management on COVID-19 related matters

### **Should all staff know who the LWR is?**

*Yes. All staff should be advised of the name and contact details of the LWR/s. School management is required to provide this information.*

### **Am I entitled to time off timetable to undertake the role of LWR?**

*Yes. Teachers are entitled to a reduction of 2 hours class contact/teaching time per week to engage in this role.*

*For example, a full-time teacher (who is not an AP1 post holder) would ordinarily have a maximum of 21 hours, 20 minutes class contact per week. If selected/appointed as LWR, s/he will have a maximum class contact of 19 hours 20 minutes per week.*

*If a teacher with an AP1 post of responsibility is selected by staff to be a LWR, s/he will be entitled to 2 hours off class contact/teaching time to engage in this role and will therefore have a maximum class contact of 15 hours 20 minutes per week.*

### **Is the time remission from timetable for the LWR available for the duration of the school year 2021/2022?**

*Yes.*

### **Can school management ask me to undertake alternative or additional duties/responsibilities during the 2-hour remission for LWR activities?**

*No.*

*The time cannot be used for **any** purpose other than those set out above.*

## **Risk Assessments**

### **Is my employer required to undertake a risk assessment due to COVID-19?**

*Yes. An employer is required under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 to ensure the safety and welfare of staff at work. It is the duty of the employer to carry out a risk assessment to meet these obligations, including workplace pregnancy risk assessments.*

*For specific questions on health and safety and for updated legislation, please refer to the Health and Safety Authority (HSA): <https://www.hsa.ie>.*

### **I am pregnant, should my employer carry out a specific risk assessment owing to my pregnancy?**

Yes.

*There is a statutory obligation on the employer to carry out a workplace pregnancy risk assessment on an employee as soon as they are notified that she is pregnant.*

## **Very High Risk Teachers**

### **How do I know if I am in the category of being at Very High Risk from contracting COVID-19 for the 2021/2022 school year?**

*The HSE advice on the 'very high risk' group is available at: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/people-at-higher-risk.html>*

*The HSE has also recently published 'Education Sector Guidance on Employees in the COVID-19 Higher Risk Categories, including Pregnant Employees'.*

*An employee who believes he/she is at very high risk of serious illness from contracting COVID-19 must:*

- *complete the online Occupational Health Service (OHS) COVID-19 Risk Assessment Questionnaire immediately and submit it to the OHS. This Questionnaire, which is available on the OHS website, must be accompanied by a completed 'Report from Treating Consultant'. Where such a Report cannot be obtained from the treating consultant within a short timeframe, a copy of the latest treating consultant's report can be obtained from the employee's GP. The Report from treating consultant template is also available on the OHS website. The contract to provide the OHS is currently held by Medmark.*
- *inform the employer immediately, or on diagnosis, that he/she believes he/she is in the 'very high risk' group.*

### **Can I appeal the categorisation of Medmark (OHS)?**

Yes.

*The details of the appeal mechanism are set out in CL42/2021.*

## Pregnant Teachers

### **I am pregnant. How is my level of risk to be determined?**

- *A pregnant teacher who has any of the medical conditions as listed on the HSE website under 'Very high risk groups (extremely vulnerable)' should apply to Medmark (OHS) for a COVID-19 Health Risk Categorisation assessment to determine if she should attend the workplace.*
- *All pregnant teachers should return a completed COVID-19 Risk Assessment Questionnaire to Medmark (OHS) to determine their individual level of risk.*
- *Medmark (OHS) will determine initially whether or not the pregnant teacher has significant vaccine protection.*

### **I am pregnant but not categorised as Very High Risk. Must I attend the workplace (i.e. return to school)?**

*Yes. The current HSE advice for the education sector states that pregnant employees, including those up to 14 weeks gestation, who are medically fit for work can attend the workplace, unless categorised by the OHS as 'Very High Risk' due to an underlying medical condition unrelated to the pregnancy.*

*The TUI is keenly aware of the concerns of pregnant teachers and is engaged in on-going discussions with the Department of Education and other relevant authorities with a view to having those concerns addressed and allayed.*

### **I am pregnant and Medmark (OHS) has categorised me as Very High Risk; should I attend the workplace (i.e. return to school)?**

*No. However, if Medmark categorises a pregnant teacher as Very High Risk, she remains available for work and the employer must facilitate - and she must engage - in alternative working arrangements i.e. work from home.*

### **I am pregnant and Medmark (OHS) has categorised me as High Risk; should I attend the workplace (i.e. return to school)?**

*You are required to attend the workplace. However, if you are categorised as High Risk you should take the advice of your medical advisor and/or Medmark in relation to any additional risk mitigation measures that may be required due to this categorisation.*

### **I am pregnant and work in a Special Education Setting, should I attend work?**

*The current HSE advice for the education sector states that a pregnant employee up to 14 weeks gestation, who is medically fit for work can attend the workplace, unless she is*



*categorised by the OHS (i.e. Medmark) as ‘Very High Risk’ due to an underlying medical condition unrelated to her pregnancy.*

*A pregnant teacher from 14 weeks gestation, who is categorised as ‘High Risk’ by Medmark should **not** be required to work in an environment which meets the following criteria:*

- *A Special Education setting, which means a special school or a dedicated special class within a mainstream primary or post primary school; with*
- *the presence of three or more employees in a single room, throughout the working day; and*
- *where social distancing between the employees in the special education setting is not consistently possible.*

*If the above criteria are met, the employer must prioritise the temporary re-assignment of the pregnant employee, to a role within the school, outside of this special education setting. An existing teacher within the school, whose current role is outside this special education setting, will then be temporarily re-assigned to the special education class.*

### **Can I appeal the categorisation of Medmark (OHS)?**

*Yes. The details of the review mechanism are set out in CL42/2021. You can supply additional information in the review process supplied by your own doctor and consultant/s.*

### **I am pregnant, should my employer carry out a specific risk assessment owing to my pregnancy?**

*Yes. There is a statutory obligation on the employer to carry out a workplace pregnancy risk assessment on an employee as soon as they are notified that she is pregnant. This is separate from and in addition to any assessment of the level of risk as determined by Medmark (OHS) and has the purpose of establishing what (if any) additional measures to mitigate risk should be put in place if the pregnant teacher is required to be in attendance in the workplace.*

## **COVID-19 Vaccination**

### **Is it envisaged that all teachers will be offered a vaccine prior to school re-opening?**

*Yes. All teachers eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine, and who opt to avail of the vaccine, should be fully vaccinated prior to a return to school.*

### **Can an employer ask me if I am vaccinated?**

*In the following circumstances, an employer can ask you if you are vaccinated.*

- A teacher who has ‘significant vaccine protection’ and who has been advised by the HSE that he/she is a close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case, may be required to inform her/his employer. The HSE rules around restricted movement have changed for individuals with ‘significant vaccine protection’. In certain circumstances, determined by the HSE, such individuals are no longer required to restrict their movements where they are a close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case.
- Where an employee is required to attend the workplace and is a close contact, the employer may need to establish, in limited circumstances, if he/she has ‘significant vaccine protection’, in order for the employer to take a decision in relation to health and safety requirements and workplace attendance.

### **Will all students be offered a vaccine prior to school re-opening?**

*Students aged 16 – 18 who opt to avail of the vaccine should be fully vaccinated (i.e. have received both doses) prior to school re-opening.*

*Students aged 12 – 15 who opt (based on parental consent) to avail of the vaccine should be eligible to receive their initial vaccination prior to school re-opening and their second dose 3-4 weeks later.*

## **Cleaning**

### **How often should classrooms be cleaned?**

*Each school setting should be cleaned at least once per day by school cleaning staff. Additional cleaning should be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, hand rails, chairs/arm rests, communal eating areas, sink and toilet facilities.*

*Students and teachers are also responsible for wiping down their own individual work area during the school day.*

- *Students who move between classes should be given cleaning products to allow them to wipe down their own desk, chair and surface area before they leave the room.*
- *All teachers will have access to cleaning products and will also be required to clean and disinfect their work area each day/before they leave the room.*

## **Ventilation**

### **What about ventilation? Is it important?**

*Yes, good ventilation is important in preventing spread of the virus. Classrooms must be well ventilated. For example, the opening of all windows and doors is recommended. A complete air change should take place every hour.*

Further guidance on Ventilation can be found at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/ad236-guidance-on-ventilation-in-schools/>

### **What practical measures should be used to ensure good ventilation?**

- *Open windows to introduce fresh air. If possible, windows should remain open during school hours.*
- *Partially opening a number of windows rather than fully opening one can help minimise discomfort. In colder weather, to minimise the chilling effect, windows nearest and above the radiator should be opened.*
- *Rooms should not be stuffy or have condensation on the window glass.*
- *Schools should ensure that all permanent ventilation openings in rooms are fully open and not blocked by wall hangings etc. These normally are either a circular or rectangular ventilation grill on the external classroom wall or linear slot type ventilators built into the window frames. All of these should be opened at all times, if they have been taped and sealed for decorating purposes then the tape/sealing should be removed.*
- *All mechanical ventilation systems and any air conditioning systems should be set to 100% fresh air; any air conditioning units that cannot operate on 100% fresh air should be left off. Check with unit suppliers if in doubt.*

Further guidance on Ventilation can be found at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/ad236-guidance-on-ventilation-in-schools/>

## **CO<sub>2</sub> Monitors**

### **Are schools being provided with CO<sub>2</sub> Monitors?**

*Yes. As an additional mitigation measure, portable CO<sub>2</sub> monitors are being supplied to schools this year. The TUI was the first group to call for the provision of these monitors, arguing that they would help teachers to know when enhanced ventilation is required to improve air quality in classrooms. It is, of course, important to note that the monitors do not regulate air quality. They simply measure the CO<sub>2</sub> level, thereby giving an indication of air quality.*

### **How effective are CO<sub>2</sub> monitors in relation to COVID-19?**

*The use of CO<sub>2</sub> monitors can provide a useful general indication that areas/rooms may not be adequately ventilated and can enable occupants to become familiar with the impact that activities, outdoor weather and window openings have on levels of good ventilation within a room.*

*In the context of COVID-19 transmission, CO<sub>2</sub> measurements are not a reliable proxy of risk to airborne exposure to the virus. Nevertheless, CO<sub>2</sub> measurements can be used to identify*

*poorly ventilated multi-occupancy spaces. However, CO<sub>2</sub> measurements are a less reliable measure of ventilation performance in single or low occupancy spaces (such as offices) or in very large spaces (such as corridors).*

*It is important, however, that air exchanges also occur in corridors and offices.*

### **Should every Classroom have a CO<sub>2</sub> Monitor?**

*In order to make best use of the portable monitors, their use should be focussed to those rooms where most beneficial (i.e. not placed in an idle room or in a large well-ventilated area with few pupils) and they should be used across rooms as necessary.*

*It is not recommended that CO<sub>2</sub> measurements be used as an indicator of room/building ventilation when there are CO<sub>2</sub> sources present other than people, such as cooking and bunsen burners.*

### **Where should I place the CO<sub>2</sub> Monitor?**

*The monitor should be placed at least 0.5 metres away from people and should not be placed near windows or ventilation grilles.*

*Further guidance on CO<sub>2</sub> Monitors can be found at:*

*<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/ad236-guidance-on-ventilation-in-schools/>*

## **Air Quality Cleaners**

### **What is an Air Quality Cleaner?**

*Air Quality cleaners are self-contained units that sit in the room they are to serve and must be plugged into an electrical power socket. They typically comprise a filter or multiple filters and a fan that sucks room air in over the filter system and discharges purified air back into the room. As air moves through the filter, pollutants and particles are captured.*

### **When should Air Quality Cleaners be used?**

*Where the practical measures for the deployment of good ventilation practices have been undertaken, and poor ventilation continues to exist in a particular room/area, air cleaners may be considered as an additional measure in conjunction with other methods of ventilation that are available.*

*They should not be used to replace ventilation but should be used in conjunction with and to support other methods of ventilation that are available.*

*Further guidance on Air Quality Cleaners can be found at:*

*<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/ad236-guidance-on-ventilation-in-schools/>*

## Hand Hygiene

### How often should teachers and students wash their hands/use hand sanitiser in school?

- On arrival at school
- When moving between classes
- Before eating or drinking
- After using the toilet
- After petting animals
- After playing outdoors
- When their hands are physically dirty
- When they cough or sneeze

## Temperature Checks

### Is it appropriate for my school to take the temperature of staff and students and refuse entry to those with a high temperature?

No. There is currently no provision in the DE guidelines for taking the temperature of staff and/or students at school.

## Social Distancing/Physical Distancing

### What are the physical distancing requirements for my classroom?

In line with the advice of the public health authorities, in all classroom settings, the physical distance of 2 metres should be maintained where possible. In exceptional circumstances, where 2 metres cannot be achieved, a minimum of one metre physical distance (i.e. of **clear space between the shoulder of one person and the shoulder of the next person, in any direction**) is **required**.<sup>1</sup> Diagrams were provided to schools last year on how to achieve this.

### What should school management do to ensure my classroom complies with the physical distancing requirements?

In post-primary schools, school management must complete the following steps as a means of ensuring compliance with the physical distancing requirement (minimum of one metre).

- Reconfigure class spaces to maximise physical distancing. The location of chairs and desks should be clearly marked.

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<sup>1</sup> The reference to **clear space between the shoulder of one person and the shoulder of the next person, in any direction** has been confirmed by the DE.

- *Utilise and reconfigure all available space in the school in order to maximise physical distancing*
- *Review timetables*
- *Reconfigure classes*
- *Consider use of live streaming within the school to accommodate those who cannot be in the classroom*
- *Access available spaces within the local community*

*If, having applied all of the six steps above, there is still a difficulty in complying with the physical distancing requirement, the principal teacher is expected to contact the Department of Education's dedicated helpline for advice and assistance. The Principal teacher must also consult with the Lead Worker Representative/s and, as the matter is of such importance to the health and welfare of members, must also advise the TUI Workplace Committee of the difficulty.*

*A school will have to be able to demonstrate clearly the actions it has taken under each of the 6 steps in the Framework for Maintaining Physical Distancing and continually review same to achieve a workable solution using whatever additional resources are provided by the Department.*

*The TUI will support the school in any efforts or representations it makes to secure the additional resources necessary for compliance with the physical distancing requirements.*

***The physical distancing requirement of a minimum of 1 metre must not be reduced , compromised or collapsed (in any classroom or in any alternative space or venue used in lieu of a classroom). To do so would put the health and safety of teachers, students and their families at unacceptable risk.***

***The TUI will regard any proposal to breach or any actual breach of the minimum physical distancing requirement as a serious industrial relations issue and will respond accordingly.***

## Class Size

**What is the maximum number of students that can be in my class, based on the size of my classroom?**

- *In a standard post-primary classroom with 49 square metres of available floorspace (i.e. cleared of storage facilities etc) – 24 students, maximum*
- *In a post-primary classroom with 42 square metres of available floorspace – 20 students, maximum*
- *In a post-primary classroom with 37 square metres of available floorspace – 17 students, maximum*

*For classroom or alternative spaces/venues of other dimensions/sizes, a pro-rata number of students applies (subject, in larger than normal spaces, to the maximum class sizes under*

existing TUI class size directives available at: <https://www.tui.ie/directives-second-level/directives-class-size.2133.html>).

Student numbers will have to be further reduced if SNA/s are present.

## Wearing of Masks

### Do teachers and students have to continue to wear masks this year?

Yes. Wearing a mask is very important because, combined with physical distancing, it is an effective protection against transmission of the virus. In the context of the busy, crowded setting of a school, it is a fundamental responsibility of school management to maintain this protection for staff and students by insisting that staff, students and visitors to the school wear appropriate masks i.e. masks that cover the nose and chin.

### As a member of staff, am I required to wear a mask in school?

Yes. As a member of staff/teacher you must wear a mask where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres, unless you have breathing difficulties.

Any teacher who does not provide a medical certificate specifying that s/he falls into the specified exceptions/exemptions for not wearing a mask will be refused entry to the school and runs the real risk of not being paid.

### I have a breathing difficulty and cannot wear a mask. What happens?

If you are medically advised not to wear a soft/cloth mask, you should wear a clear visor and remain 2 metres from others at all times.

### What type of mask should I wear?

The general rule is that cloth masks must be worn. This is in line with the advice of the public health authorities and has been established as a requirement by the Minister for Education/Government.

- Masks must not contain any slogans/logos/images that may cause upset or be deemed offensive to any member of the school community.
- Cloth masks should be washed, in a hot wash (i.e. over 60 degrees) with detergent, after every day of use and/or before being used again, or if visibly soiled.
- Masks should not be worn if they are wet. A wet cloth mask may make it difficult to breathe.

## **Are there any exceptions to (exemptions from) the general rule (that cloth masks must be worn)?**

*There are specified exceptions to/exemptions from this general rule. The public health authorities have stated that cloth masks should not be worn by anybody in the following categories:*

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

*A medical certificate to certify that a person falls into a category listed above must be provided to the school by, or on behalf of, any person (staff or student) who claims that s/he is covered by one or more of the listed exceptions/exemptions.*

## **Can I wear a visor rather than a mask?**

*In certain limited situations, the use of clear visors should be considered; for example when staff are interacting with students with hearing difficulties or learning difficulties. In all other instances, cloth masks must be worn.*

*It is of course open to a teacher/member of staff to wear a visor as well as (but not instead of) a cloth mask.*

## **Do I have to provide my own mask?**

*Teachers may wish to use their own cloth masks and are, in any event, expected to wash such coverings, in a hot wash (i.e. over 60 degrees) with detergent, after every day of use and/or before being used again, or if visibly soiled.*

*However, schools are expected to have additional disposable masks available on site.*

## **Should I wear medical standard face masks?**

*The use of medical standard face masks is not generally required in classroom settings by teachers.*

*However medical face masks should be worn in circumstances where teachers need to be in close and continued proximity with students with intimate care needs, by SEN teachers working in ASD classrooms, by those teachers working as bus escorts and those who work in practical classes where it may be necessary (occasionally) to breach the one metre physical distance.*



*Where medical face masks are required, they should be purchased by the school and are available under the PPE procurement process.*

### **My school has installed a perspex screen at my desk. Do I still have to wear a mask?**

*Yes.*

*Teachers, in many instances, will be moving from room to room and should therefore wear a mask at all times. A perspex screen may be a useful additional protection but it cannot and does not reduce or remove the requirement that teachers wear masks. Nor does it reduce or remove the requirement for a minimum of 1 metre physical distancing.*

### **My school has installed a perspex screen at my desk. Is it ok if I just wear a visor?**

*No, other than in the limited circumstances set out above.*

*Based on public health advice, the Government has stated that all teachers must wear a mask where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres, unless the teacher has breathing difficulties.*

*Teachers, in many instances, will be moving from room to room and must therefore wear a mask, as opposed to a visor, unless working with a student with a hearing or learning difficulty, as specified above. It is of course open to a teacher/member of staff to wear a visor as well as (but not instead of) a mask.*

### **Am I required to wear masks in other areas of the school outside of my classroom, for example, in the staff room?**

*Yes. All teachers/members of staff must wear a mask where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres.*

### **Will I ever be required to wear additional PPE?**

*Some circumstances and/or work activities will require the wearing of additional PPE. These include, but are not limited to:*

- *Where a suspected case of COVID-19 is identified while at school*
- *Where a teacher is particularly vulnerable to infection but not categorised as being in the Very High Risk Group*
- *Where a teacher may be living with someone in the Very High Risk category*
- *When administering first aid*

## **Will students (including those under 13 in a post-primary school) be required to wear masks?**

*Yes. Masks must be worn by every student unless s/he:*

- *Has a difficulty breathing*
- *Is unconscious or incapacitated*
- *Is unable to remove the mask without assistance*
- *Has special needs and may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the mask; for example persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, sensory concerns or tactile sensitivity.*

*A medical certificate to certify that a student falls into a category listed above must be provided to the school by, or on behalf of, the student who claims that s/he is covered by one or more of the listed exceptions/exemptions.*

*In circumstances where a medical certificate is not provided the student will be refused entry to the school.*

## **Will students/staff be required to wear masks throughout the school day?**

*Yes. All students and teachers/members of staff must wear a mask where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres.*

## **What happens if a student (who is not exempt, as set out above) refuses to wear a mask?**

*A refusal by a student to wear a mask is a serious disciplinary offence and should be considered and treated as a serious breach under the school's code of behaviour, inclusive of the nationally agreed supplement to the code mandated by the Department of Education.*

*The nationally agreed supplement has been provided to schools and must be adopted by a school's Board of Management/ETB.*

## **So there are two key measures to protect staff and student – physical distancing of no less than one metre and the compulsory wearing of masks?**

*Yes, that is correct. These are required and complementary. They both apply – not one or the other; both.*

## **Does reliance on compulsory mask wearing allow a school to abandon physical distancing or reduce it to less than one metre?**

*No. Absolutely not. Both measures are required.*

## Does reliance on physical distancing allow a school to abandon compulsory mask wearing?

*No. Absolutely not. Both measures are required.*

## Does the roll-out of the vaccination programme allow a school to abandon compulsory mask wearing and/or to abandon physical distancing or reduce it to less than one metre?

*No. Absolutely not. All measures are still required. This has been confirmed by the public health authorities and the Department of Education. There is no relaxation of the mitigation measures and the threat represented by COVID-19 remains potent, not least because of the prevalence and transmissibility of the Delta variant.*

## COVID-19 Diagnosis

### I have COVID-19 symptoms. Should I attend school?

*No, absolutely not. You must not attend school. Symptoms of COVID-19 can be found at: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/covid19/symptoms/overview/>*

### What should I do if I develop symptoms of COVID-19 at school?

*You must advise your school management immediately and follow the relevant procedures as set out in the school's COVID-19 Response Plan.*

### What happens if a student presents with COVID-19 symptoms during the school day?

*Each school's COVID-19 Response Plan must deal with this scenario. All staff must be advised of the procedure that applies in their school.*

### I have been diagnosed with COVID-19. Will I still get paid?

*Yes. Special leave with pay will be granted by the school/ETB, for those teachers who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or those who have been advised to self-isolate.*

*To apply for special leave with pay, a teacher must complete the relevant **Appendix of CL42/2021** and return it to the school immediately. The completed form, which can be signed digitally, must be accompanied by appropriate HSE/medical certification to include the estimated date of fitness to return to work. The certification can be scanned and emailed to the school/ETB until you are fit to return to work and are in a position to provide the original version.*

## **I have been diagnosed with COVID-19. Must I advise my school/ETB?**

*Yes. A teacher must provide HSE/medical certification to the employer, to include estimated date of fitness to return to work. Where medical/HSE certification is unavailable, the employer can accept a copy of the HSE text message screen shot confirming the date/time of the COVID-19 test and the HSE text message confirming the COVID-19 test result, accompanied by the completed Application Form (Appendix to CL42/2021).*

## **If I have been diagnosed with COVID-19. Will it affect my normal sick leave?**

*No. Special leave with pay is available and is separate to the normal sick leave scheme.*

## **Self-isolation**

### **What is self-isolation?**

*Self-isolation means staying indoors and completely avoiding contact with other people. This includes other people in the household, as much as possible. A teacher with COVID-19 symptoms will be medically/HSE advised to self-isolate while he/she waits for a COVID-19 test appointment and test results.*

### **I have been advised to self-isolate. Will I still get paid?**

*Yes. Special leave with pay will be granted by the school/ETB, for those teachers who have been advised to self-isolate pending a COVID-19 test. A teacher must seek a COVID-19 test immediately upon experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and/or being advised to self-isolate.*

*To apply for special leave with pay, a teacher must complete the relevant Appendix of CL42/2021 and return it to the school immediately. The completed form, which can be signed digitally, must be accompanied by appropriate HSE/medical certification to include estimated date of fitness to return to work. The certification can be scanned and emailed to the school/ETB until you are fit to return to work and are in a position to provide the original version.*

*Where medical/HSE certification is unavailable, the employer can accept a copy of the HSE text message screen shot confirming the date/time of the COVID-19 test and the HSE text message confirming the COVID-19 test result, accompanied by the completed Application Form.*

*If the COVID-19 test is positive the teacher remains on special leave with pay.*

*If the COVID-19 test is negative, following the period of self-isolation, and the teacher remains unwell, s/he reverts to the normal sick leave scheme.*

## Am I required to tell my school if I have been advised to self-isolate?

Yes. All teachers have a responsibility to adhere to Government guidelines as they relate to COVID-19. If school management becomes aware that a teacher attended school when s/he should have been self-isolating, they are expected to report this to the HSE. The matter may also have to be dealt with at local level.

## Close Contact

### Whose responsibility is it to advise me that I have been in contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case/person? Is it the responsibility of the school or the HSE?

If you are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 you will receive either:

- a call from a Contact Tracer
- an alert on your mobile phone, if you're using the COVID Tracker app

Calls from contact tracers come up as a private number. You cannot contact a contact tracer directly or return a missed call. If you don't answer a call from a contact tracer, s/he will leave a message, if voicemail is activated on your phone. Contact tracers will let you know that they have tried to contact you. They will call you a few times, if necessary.

**It is not the responsibility of the school to conduct contract tracing. However, schools are required to keep a contact log of all persons attending/visiting the school.**

### I have been in contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case/person. Should I attend school?

If you are fully vaccinated and have sufficient vaccine protection and do not have any COVID-19 symptoms you may be allowed to attend work. This will be determined by the HSE following a public health risk assessment.

### I have been advised that I am a close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case/person and have been advised to restrict my movement. What happens?

If you have no COVID-19 symptoms you may still be medically/HSE advised to restrict your movements if you have been in close contact with a person who has a confirmed case of COVID-19 or if you live with someone who has COVID-19 symptoms. This will be determined by the HSE.

### I have been advised that I am a close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case/person and have been advised that, as I have sufficient vaccine protection, I can attend work as normal. Is this correct?

Yes.

The HSE sets out the latest criteria for restricted movement, where an individual has been advised by the HSE she/he is a close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case. Please refer to HSE link at: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/covid19/contact-tracing/close-casual-contact/>

### **If I am advised to restrict my movement, am I required to teach online while restricting my movements?**

*If you are advised to restrict your movements and are not, yourself, symptomatic, you are medically fit for work and remain available for work. You will be assigned work which can be completed remotely and your employer must therefore facilitate alternative working arrangements to the maximum extent possible e.g. working from home.*

*As there is a contractual obligation to work while well, all employees must co-operate with all such flexibilities while they are restricting their movements. Where an employee on restricted movement tests positive for COVID-19, the provisions (including special leave provisions) set out above apply.*

## **Teacher with caring or childcare responsibilities or living with high risk or very high risk individual**

### **I live with a high risk or very high risk individual, do I have to attend work?**

*Special leave with pay is not available for an employee who lives with a high risk or very high risk individual. However, a teacher may avail of other relevant leave provisions such as parental leave, parent's leave, carer's leave etc.*

### **I am required to care for a COVID-19 positive individual (e.g. child), what happens?**

*You can apply for restricted movement leave during the 10-day period of self-isolation for the 'person' who needs care and also for a further 7 days after the 'person's' period of self-isolation ends.*

*You remain available for work and should be facilitated to work remotely for the 17-day consecutive period.*

## COVID-19 Related Leave Provisions

Scenario	Leave Provision	Paid (yes/no)
<i>I have COVID-19 symptoms and I am waiting for a medical assessment to determine if a COVID-19 test is required (irrespective of whether I have significant vaccine protection or not).</i>	<i>Special Leave with Pay</i>	Yes
<i>I have COVID-19 symptoms and I have been advised by GP/HSE to attend for a COVID-19 test and I am waiting for the test and test result.</i>	<i>Special Leave with Pay</i>	Yes
<i>I have COVID-19 symptoms and I have been notified of a negative COVID-19 test result but have been advised by the HSE to attend for a second test.</i>	<i>Special Leave with Pay</i>	Yes
<i>I have COVID-19 symptoms and I have been notified of a positive COVID-19 test result.</i>	<i>Special Leave with Pay (COVID-19: Diagnosis) applies during this period, up to maximum of 28 days. Where the absence extends beyond 28 days, the employee is recorded as absent on Sick Leave, unless the criteria set out in CL42/2021 apply.</i>	Yes
<i>I have COVID-19 symptoms, have been notified of a positive COVID-19 test result and I am absent beyond the 28-day period.</i>	<i>Special Leave with Pay may be extended by the employer beyond 28 days where the criteria as set out in CL42/2021 are met.</i>	Yes
<i>I have no COVID-19 symptoms and was a close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case. I have been notified of a positive test result.</i>	<i>Special Leave with Pay</i>	Yes

Scenario	Leave Provision	Paid (yes/no)
<p><i>I do not have significant vaccine protection, have no COVID-19 symptoms and have been advised by HSE Contact Tracing Team that I am a close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case. A COVID-19 test is arranged for me.</i></p>	<p><i>Restricted movement leave until test result is known</i></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><i>I (regardless of vaccination status) have no COVID-19 symptoms and have been advised by HSE Contact Tracing Team that I am a close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 <b>variant of concern</b> case.</i></p>	<p><i>Restricted movement leave until test result is known</i></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><i>I have no COVID-19 symptoms, have significant vaccine protection or have previously recovered from COVID-19 and have been advised by the HSE Contact Tracing Team that I am a close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case.</i></p>	<p><i>No leave provision – attend work</i></p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><i>I have no COVID-19 symptoms and live with a ‘person’ who has COVID-19 symptoms. This ‘person’ must arrange a COVID-19 test.</i></p>	<p><i>Restricted movement leave until test result is known</i></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><i>I am concerned that I have COVID-19 symptoms, but GP advises that I do not meet the criteria for a COVID-19 test. I am advised by the GP to restrict my movements until I am 48 hours symptom free.</i></p>	<p><i>Sick leave if not fit to work.</i></p> <p><i>Restricted movement leave if fit to work remotely.</i></p>	<p><i>Yes - if paid sick leave remaining</i></p> <p><i>Yes – restricted movement</i></p>
<p><i>I have COVID-19 symptoms and have been notified of a negative COVID-19 test result and have been advised by the HSE to self-isolate until I am 48 hours symptom free</i></p>	<p><i>Sick leave if not fit to work.</i></p> <p><i>Restricted movement leave if fit to work remotely.</i></p>	<p><i>Yes - if sick leave remaining</i></p> <p><i>Yes – restricted movement</i></p>



<i>Scenario</i>	<i>Leave Provision</i>	<i>Paid (yes/no)</i>
<i>I am providing care to a 'person' (e.g., young child) who is a confirmed COVID-19 case.</i>	<i>Restricted Movement leave during the 10-day period of self-isolation for the 'person' who needs care and also for a further 7 days after the 'person's' period of self-isolation ends</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>I am concerned that I may be a close or casual contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case.</i>	<i>No leave provision and should attend for work unless advised differently by the HSE Contact Tracing Team</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<i>I do not have COVID-19 symptoms, but I live with a 'person' who is a close contact of a confirmed case. The 'person' feels well so therefore the other household members do not need to restrict their movements.</i>	<i>No leave provision and should attend for work</i>	<i>N/A</i>

## Travel Abroad

### What happens if I wish to travel abroad before going back to school or during Christmas or mid-term breaks?

*Where there is an intention to undertake travel overseas to any country which requires a restricted movement period on return to Ireland, an employee must make provision by way of an Unpaid Leave application, in advance, for that period of restricted movement, where it falls on their return to work due date.*

*The travel advice that pertains at the time of travel will apply to all staff and students.*

## Staff Rooms

### **My school staff room has been converted into a classroom. Is this allowed?**

*The staff room should only be used as a classroom where school management has exhausted all other options and management informs staff of all other options explored.*

*Where a staff room is being used as a classroom, school management should provide a suitable alternative facility for staff.*

### **What is the physical distancing requirement for the staff room?**

*In staff rooms and canteens, the physical distance of 2 metres should be maintained where possible. In exceptional circumstances where 2 metres cannot be achieved, a minimum of one metre physical distance (i.e. of **clear space between the shoulder of one person and the shoulder of the next person**) is required.*

*Consideration should be given to formation of staff pods or teams who work together and who can take breaks together.*

### **What is the physical distancing requirement for staff meetings?**

*When organising staff meetings, school management should make every possible effort to hold them remotely.*

*If corporeal meetings are held they should comprise small groups. In every instance, 2 metres physical distancing must be maintained.*

### **What about other gatherings, assemblies etc.?**

*School management should make every possible effort to hold such gatherings/assemblies remotely. Large corporeal gatherings, including large full school/year group assemblies in one physical space, should be avoided.*

*As was the case in the past year, the TUI will assist members in circumstances where school management proposes to convene a meeting/gathering/assembly that is not in compliance with this advice.*

### **If the staff room in my school/centre/college is being used as a classroom, is my employer required to provide suitable alternative facilities for staff?**

*Yes. The employer is required either to provide suitable and adequate facilities to allow employees to eat and drink any meals or beverages or to have arrangements in place to allow employees access to other suitable and adequate facilities.*

*Any facilities provided or made available for use by employees must have means for boiling water.*

*Table surfaces should be easy to clean. Sitting facilities/seating should have back supports. The area should have adequate lighting and heating.*

*All members should familiarise themselves with the guidelines as provided by the Health and Safety Authority which are available at this link -*

*[https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Publications\\_and\\_Forms/Publications/General\\_Application\\_Regulations/gen\\_apps\\_workplace.pdf](https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Publications_and_Forms/Publications/General_Application_Regulations/gen_apps_workplace.pdf)*

**Local management has said that because the staff room is being used for classes and space is at a premium, staff will have to eat their lunch/drink their tea in their cars/in the school yard/in the local park/in a local café. Is that acceptable?**

*No.*

*As set out above, management must either provide suitable and adequate facilities or have arrangements in place to allow employees access to other suitable and adequate facilities. A car, school yard, local park or café would not be suitable and/or adequate.*

**Local management has said that because the staff room is being used for classes and space is at a premium, staff will have to eat their lunch/drink their tea in a classroom while supervising students. Is that acceptable?**

*No.*

*Under the Organisation of Working Time Act, employees have an entitlement to scheduled breaks, including lunch breaks. You cannot be required to supervise students while on such a break, as supervision is work and a break is a break from work.*

**What should I do if management refuses to provide or put arrangements in place to allow employees access to suitable and adequate facilities?**

*In the first instance, the Lead Worker Representative should be informed and requested to make representations to management. If this does not lead to a swift resolution of the matter, TUI members should follow the 'Procedure for Dealing with Health and Safety Concerns in Schools/Colleges/Centres/IOs/TUs owing to COVID-19'.*

*You should also inform the TUI Workplace Committee which should, in turn, proceed in accordance with the procedure/steps set out later in these FAQs and keep the members and the local Branch officers advised of progress.*

## Extra-Curricular Activities

### Can extra-curricular activities still take place?

*The primary focus for all schools is on re-opening for classes and sustaining that re-opening. Following consultation with staff, schools may decide to commence extra-curricular activities that comply with public health guidelines. Before doing so, a risk assessment of the activity, as it relates to COVID-19, must take place and the activity can only proceed if it adheres to the public health advice applicable at the time. If the activity is governed by a national body, the guidelines of that body must also be adhered to.*

## Access to school

### Can visitors be permitted entry to my school?

*Attendance by visitors to school is restricted to those attending for essential reasons only and will only be allowed with prior arrangement with the school principal.*

### Is my school required to keep a contact log for all those attending or visiting the school?

Yes.

## Meetings with Parents/Guardians

### Is it possible to meet with parents/guardians in a physical setting?

*Communication with parents/guardians should transact remotely i.e. by phone/text. If necessary, communication may transact on a virtual platform used by the school (Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Google Classroom etc.).*

*If it is deemed essential and necessary to meet parents/guardians in a physical setting, this must transact by an appointment process only. The meeting must take place in a room where social distancing of 2 metres can be strictly maintained and which has been cleaned before and – will be cleaned again after - the visit.*

## Croke Park Hours

### Should Croke Park Hours- related activities take place this year?

Yes. Under National Pay Agreements including:

- Public Service Agreement (aka 'Croke Park Agreement') and continued under:

- *Haddington Road Agreement (HRA)*
- *Lansdowne Road Agreement (LRA)*
- *Public Service Stability Agreement (PSSA) and*
- *Building Momentum Agreement*

*an additional **33 hours** per annum (Croke Park Hours) is required of teachers to facilitate, at the discretion of management in the case of 23 such hours:*

- *School Planning & Policy Development*
- *Staff Meetings*
- *Additional Parent Teacher Meetings*
- *Continuing Professional Development*
- *Induction*
- *Supervision and Substitution*

### **Should Croke Park Hours-related activities take place corporeally this year?**

*When organising Croke Park meetings, school management should make every possible effort to hold them remotely or in small groups. Large gatherings in one physical space should be avoided. In the case of any corporeal meeting, 2 metre physical distancing must be strictly maintained.*

### **School management is looking to change the Croke Park schedule for the 2021/22 school year that was agreed in April/May. is this allowed?**

- *Before the end of the school year (i.e. in May 2021), the calendar for the use of the 23 hours in the next academic year (2021/2022) **must have been agreed by staff**, after consultation and consensus (as appropriate).*
- *The agreed calendar of usage of the 23 hours must be made available to the school community at the **commencement** of each school year.*
- *This calendar can subsequently be changed **only in exceptional circumstances** and only following consultation and consensus (as appropriate). A staff meeting should be called for the purpose of considering and responding to a written proposal to change the agreed calendar.*
- *Any attempt by management to impose a changed calendar is unacceptable, a breach of a national collective agreement and must be reported to the local TUI Branch officers and Area Representative as a matter of urgency.*

## Additional Supervision in Schools

### Why will more supervision be required in schools this year?

*Additional supervision will be required to support and maintain social/physical distancing in schools. There will be a requirement for more supervision before and after school, at break times and at lunchtime. In addition, more entry and exit points will continue to be used by schools this year and these will need to be supervised. Areas such as bathrooms and locker areas (if lockers are permitted for use this year) will also require extra vigilance.*

### Am I required to undertake extra supervision this year?

*No. Undertaking this additional supervision is strictly voluntary, as was the case in 2020/21. It is entirely separate from the S&S scheme.*

### Is there a change in the quantum of supervision required from a teacher who is engaged in the S&S scheme?

*No. The level of supervision **required** from a teacher under the S&S scheme should be no more than the level of supervision that was required previously.*

### If I am currently in the S&S scheme and I undertake additional supervision, how will I be paid?

*You will be paid for any additional supervision carried out in any given week in 2021/22 that is over and above the weekly level of supervision you carried out under your contracted, compulsory S&S liability.*

### How much supervision am I required to do, under normal circumstances, if I am in the compulsory S&S scheme?

*Under an agreement reached at the Teachers' Conciliation Council, a teacher cannot be required to engage in supervision for more than 50 minutes in a given week. A teacher, may, following consultation and agreement, undertake more than 50 minutes.*

*However, if in 2020/2021 you were, for example, undertaking 45 minutes of supervision per week (say, 30 mins at lunchtime and a 15 minute break) under the compulsory S&S scheme, any additional supervision (i.e. above 45 minutes) undertaken in a given week in the 2021/22 school year, must be paid as additional supervision.*

### If I am a Deputy Principal or Principal, can I opt to undertake and get paid for additional supervision under the additional scheme?

*Yes, provided you are also in the S&S scheme (on the roster) already.*

**If I normally undertake 50 minutes per week supervision under the S&S scheme, and I agree to do an extra 30 minutes additional supervision for this year only will I be paid extra for it?**

*Yes. A teacher will be paid for additional supervision carried out on a weekly basis in 2021/22 that is over and above the weekly level of supervision carried out by the teacher under their compulsory S&S liability in 2020/21.*

**How will the additional supervision be allocated within the school?**

*Following representations by the TUI, additional supervision will be offered **in the following order**:*

- *Part-time teachers employed in the school who are not currently opted out of the S&S scheme, then*
- *Full-time teachers employed in the school who are not currently opted out of the S&S scheme, then*
- *Teachers employed in the school who are currently opted out of the S&S scheme whether employed on a part-time or full-time basis, then*
- *A PME student who is undertaking the school placement element of her/his PME course in that school may be offered supervision. Where this occurs, the student should as far as possible carry out supervision in an area of the school where they have contact with a teacher colleague.*
- *Where additional supervision hours remain after the above sequence has been exhausted, school management may source and recruit personnel to provide supervision services.*

**If I commit to additional supervision this year, will I be compelled to do it in other years?**

*No.*

**I am prepared to provide additional supervision until Christmas: can I do this?**

*Teachers should consult with school management in this regard. There is nothing prohibiting this approach by a teacher.*

## Compliance issues

**I have a student who deliberately flouts the COVID-19 Response Plan; for example, by refusing to comply with hand hygiene or social distancing. What happens?**

*Any breach of the COVID-19 response plan or any action/inaction that puts the health and safety of teachers, other staff or other students at risk is a serious disciplinary offence and should be considered and treated as a serious breach under the school's code of behaviour.*

**What are my Health and Safety (H&S) responsibilities in terms of COVID-19?**

*Employers and all employees in a school have responsibilities and duties. An employee, must:*

- *Comply with the school/college/centre COVID-19 Response plan; for example, by maintaining physical distancing, wearing masks and practising good hand hygiene*
- *Comply with safety and health legislation*
- *Take reasonable care to protect her/his own safety, health and welfare and that of any other person who may be affected by her/his acts or omissions at work*
- *Co-operate with the employer and any other person to enable them to comply with health and safety legislation*
- *Not engage in improper conduct or other behaviour which could endanger his or her safety, health and welfare or that of any other person.*

**What is the procedure for dealing with COVID-19 Health & Safety concerns?**

*The COVID-19 response plan makes provision for a workplace to have a Lead Worker Representative (LWR). In the first instance, concerns or issues that arise are processed in accordance with the procedures specified in the COVID-19 Response Plan.*

**What if COVID-19 Health & Safety concerns are not appropriately addressed by school management? Will the TUI intervene?**

*If the procedures specified in the COVID-19 Response are not applied in a fair, transparent and prompt manner or if the issue is not satisfactorily resolved, the **TUI reserves the right to act on behalf of members to protect their health and safety, as outlined in the following steps.***

### **Step one:**

*If a TUI member wishes to raise a COVID-19 related health and safety issue in a school/college/centre s/he should, in the first instance, inform the Lead Worker Representative (LWR). The member should also advise the TUI Workplace Committee (WPC) and the WPC should keep a record of this.*



### **Step Two:**

*The LWR will deal with issues that arise in line with the procedure set out in the workplace COVID-19 Response Plan. This includes raising the matter with school/college/centre management/employer immediately and keeping a record of all COVID-19 problems, areas of non-compliance or defects that the LWR has identified or that have been reported to her/him.*

*Under this procedure the employer is expected to act promptly on these representations. If unable or unwilling to do so, the employer (for example, school/college/centre management) must detail the reasons why, in order that the LWR can escalate the issue of concern, in the manner specified in the COVID-19 Response Plan.*

*If a concern is resolved, the LWR must record any actions taken to rectify the concern and inform staff.*

### **Step Three:**

*If, notwithstanding the efforts of the LWR, a concern has not been addressed to the satisfaction of the TUI member/s, the matter should then be referred as an industrial relations issue/grievance to the TUI Workplace Committee (WPC).*

*The TUI WPC can seek advice from the local Branch Officers and/or Area Rep. The contact details for Area Reps can be found in the TUI Diary and Handbook that issues to all members in September. Contact details are also available by contacting TUI Head Office on 01-4922588 or [tui@tui.ie](mailto:tui@tui.ie).*

*The TUI WPC will meet with management immediately and seek to resolve the matter. In an ETB, if a satisfactory resolution is not provided by local management, the WPC will advise the local Branch who will contact the ETB (Director of Schools, Director of Further Education and Training, Director of OSD, Human Resource Department, as appropriate) to seek an immediate resolution of the matter.*

*In a C&C or Voluntary Secondary School, the WPC will bring the matter to the attention of the Board of Management to seek a resolution.*

### **Step Four:**

*If a satisfactory resolution is not provided, following the steps as outlined above, the WPC will:*

- *Lodge a collective grievance using the nationally agreed grievance procedure*  
**and**
- *Report the matter to the Health and Safety Authority. If the HSA sends an inspector to the workplace, the LWR is entitled to accompany them during the inspection and to get a copy of any recommendations or orders. This should, in turn, be provided to the TUI WPC.*  
**and**
- *Where relevant, report the matter to the Health Service Executive (HSE).*

## Additional Teachers, Changes to Career Break & Job Sharing Schemes

### My school is looking to hire more teachers. I am part-time. Should I be offered these hours, in the first instance?

Yes. Schools/ETBs must offer any available hours to existing part-time staff in the first instance, by operating the mandatory criteria and sequence set out in CL59/2016 (ETB and C&C) and CL49/2017 (Voluntary Secondary Schools). Failure or refusal by management to comply with the terms of the relevant Circular constitutes a breach of a national collective agreement, deprives members of income to which they are entitled and must be reported immediately to the TUI – Workplace Committee, Branch Officers and Area Representative. In any such instance the Union will support the affected member/s.

### Following application of CL59/2016 and CL49/2017, what sequence should be used for filling additional hours/posts that then remain?

Any hours that are then available (following application of CL59/2016 and CL49/2017) must be filled using the following sequence:

- job sharing teachers who work in the school and who would like to undertake the additional hours will be offered the hours
- advertising the new hours/posts:
  - if an appropriately qualified and registered teacher who is not retired is not available following the recruitment process (including a teacher who is on career break from a school), a retired teacher who is appropriately qualified and registered teacher may be employed
  - If following the steps above a post/hours remain unfilled they can be filled by a registered teacher who is not appropriately qualified with preference to those who are not retired, for example PME students
  - If a post/hours continue to remain unfilled, the post/hours may be filled through the hiring of an unregistered teacher, in line with the rules governing hiring such persons which are available at:  
<https://www.education.ie/en/Education-Staff/Services/Breaks-Leave/Webbook-Archive/Terms-and-Conditions-of-Employment-for-Registered-Teachers-in-Recognised-Primary-and-Post-Primary-Schools.pdf>

### I have been hired under the additional allocation provided to schools owing to COVID-19. What type of contract should I get?

The additional hours allocated are being treated as part of normal allocation and therefore will be filled under pro-rata fixed-term contracts. If you are not offered a pro-rata fixed-term contract, you should so advise the TUI Workplace Committee.

## **What changes have been made to the Career Break scheme?**

*A teacher who is on a Career Break may now be employed, in a substitute capacity only, without the restrictions imposed in the Career Break Scheme as contained in Chapter 7 (Paragraph 8.1) of Circular 54/2019.*

*A teacher who is on career break and is employed in a substitute capacity will be paid at the same rate as a regular substitute.*

*Such substitute teaching will count towards progression on the incremental salary scale and superannuation.*

## **What changes have been made to the Job-Sharing scheme?**

*A job sharing teacher, if and only if s/he so chooses, may be employed to work in a substitute capacity, during the period he/she is rostered off duty.*

*Given the need to minimise movement between schools during the current COVID-19 pandemic, the Job Sharing teacher is limited to carrying out substitute work in his/her own school.*

*A Job Sharing teacher who is employed in a substitute capacity will be paid the personal rate of pay (including personal allowances).*

*Such substitute teaching will count towards progression on the incremental salary scale and superannuation. This is subject to the requirement that a Job Sharing teacher can advance to the next incremental point on the scale only after a minimum of 365 days after the last increment was awarded.*

*A Job Sharing teacher undertaking a combination of work in a job-sharing capacity and as a substitute in his/her own school is not permitted to exceed the maximum number of weekly contracted hours of a full time teacher, or AP1, as appropriate.*

## **What happens if a number of teachers are absent from school on sick leave and the school cannot source appropriate substitution cover?**

*This is a matter for school management. School management has a responsibility to ensure that all students are supervised at all times. If appropriate substitution cover is not available, school management may need to take the decision to send class groups home.*

*Teachers must not, under any circumstances, reduce social distancing measures in a classroom to accommodate additional students owing to teacher absence.*

*Management or teachers must not, under any circumstances, breach the class size directives to accommodate additional students owing to teacher absence. Any proposed or actual breach of the directives should be immediately advised to the TUI Workplace Committee.*

## PME Students

### **I am a PME student. Can I be hired by a school to teach?**

*Yes. PME students who are registered with the Teaching Council (typically under Route 3/Further Education) and are in the school undertaking school placement as part of their PME programme, can be recruited in line with CL31/2011. That is, they can be paid for hours worked (teaching, substitution or supervision) that are in addition to the unpaid placement hours required as part of the PME programme. Such teachers will be paid at the unqualified rate of pay.*

***PME students should not be asked and cannot be required to work on an unpaid or underpaid basis for any such additional hours. Failure to pay the appropriate rate is a serious matter and, if it arises, the TUI Workplace Committee should be informed immediately.***

*In keeping with the Teaching Council protocol, this must not impact adversely on the teacher's professional development and achievement of their PME qualification. It is essential that engagement of these teachers adheres to the Teaching Council protocol, the school's policy on school placement and the Memorandum of Understanding agreed between the school and the higher education institution.*

### **I am a PME student. Can I join the TUI?**

***Yes. There is no fee to join the TUI as a student member and you will have access to TUI advice and representation. To join the TUI, please visit [www.tui.ie](http://www.tui.ie) and complete the student application form.***

*Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, it is likely that many student teachers will be offered paid employment in schools for the 2021/2022 academic year, either for teaching/substitution hours or supervision hours, or both. Therefore, to ensure that student teachers are protected in their workplace, the TUI will offer representation, where necessary, to such members who join the TUI as student members.*

### **As a PME Student, how will school placement take place in the context of COVID-19?**

*Updated advice has been provided for PME students on school placements. This advice can be found at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/47669-guidance-note-for-school-placement/?referrer=http://www.gov.ie/en/publication/f48ac-guidance-note-for-school-placement-20202021/>*

**This document will be updated on a regular basis so please continue to check the website ([www.tui.ie](http://www.tui.ie)), TUI's social media and the TUI App following the initial publication.**