



Teachers' Union of Ireland

# Re-opening of Post Primary Schools Guidance for TUI members\*

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The TUI strongly urges members to read the DES document:

*“COVID-19 Response Plan for the Safe and Sustainable Re-opening of  
Post Primary Schools”*

*available at:*

*<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7acad-reopening-our-post-primary-schools/>*

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**\* This Guidance 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**

**Green shading- 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020 updates**

**Yellow shading – 26<sup>th</sup> August 2020 updates**

**Grey shading – 7<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

**Blue shading – 17<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

**Orange Shading – 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

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# Social Distancing/Physical Distancing

## What is social distancing/physical distancing?

*Social/physical distancing involves minimising contact between potentially infected individuals and healthy individuals. Teachers should avoid all social/physical contact in school (for example, shaking hands) and also avoid sharing personal items such as pens, cups, etc.*

## Why is physical distancing so important?

*It is important because it is the single most 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 provide and maintain this protection for staff and students.*

## 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>*

## 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.*
- *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*
- *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 and, as the matter is of such importance to the*

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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 DES

health and welfare of members, must also advise the TUI Workplace Committee of the difficulty.

Schools will have to be able to clearly demonstrate 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.***

## **What is the maximum number of students that can be in my class based on the size of my classroom?<sup>2</sup>**

- *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 may have to be further reduced if SNA/s are present.*

## **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.*

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<sup>2</sup> DES Framework to maintain Physical Distancing in the Classroom in Post Primary Schools with a Full Return of All Students for the 2020/21 School Year.

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/staff meetings?**

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.

**When organising staff meetings, school management should make every possible effort to hold them remotely or in small groups while maintaining a 2m distance and to avoid large gatherings including large full school/year group assemblies in one physical space.**

### **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'.*

## **Cleaning and Ventilation**

**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.*

**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.*

**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 rectangle ventilation grill on the external classroom wall or linear slot type ventilators built into the window frames. All of these should be opened all the time, 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.*

## **Wearing of Face Coverings**

### **Why is wearing face coverings so important?**

*It is 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 face coverings.*

### **As a member of staff, am I required to wear a face covering in school?**

*Yes. As a member of staff/teacher you must wear a face covering 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 face covering 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 soft face covering. What happens?**

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

### **What type of face covering should I wear?**

*The general rule is that cloth face coverings 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.*

- *Face coverings must not contain any slogans/logos/images that may cause upset or be deemed offensive to any member of the school community.*

- *Cloth face coverings 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.*
- *Face coverings should not be worn if they are wet. A wet cloth face covering may make it difficult to breathe.*

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

*There are specified exceptions to/exemptions from this general rule. The public health authorities have stated that cloth face coverings 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 face-covering without assistance*
- *Any person who has special needs and who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the face covering, 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 cloth face covering?**

*In certain 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 face coverings must be worn. It is of course open to a teacher/member of staff to wear a visor as well as a cloth face covering.*

### **Do I have to provide my own face covering?**

*Teachers may wish to use their own cloth face coverings 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 face coverings 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 and by those teachers working as bus escorts.*

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

## **My school has put a perspex screen at my desk. Do I still have to wear a face covering?**

*Yes. Teachers, in many instances, will be moving from room to room and should therefore wear a soft face covering 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 face coverings. 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 soft face covering 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 should therefore wear a soft face covering as opposed to a visor unless working with a student with a hearing or learning difficulty. It is of course open to a teacher/member of staff to wear a visor as well as a cloth face covering.*

## **Am I required to wear face coverings 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 face covering where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres.*

## **Am I required to wear face coverings on public transport?**

*Yes. All teachers/members of staff and students must wear face coverings when traveling to and from school via public transport.*

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

*Some work activities will require the wearing of additional PPE, including, but 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 face coverings?**

*Yes. Cloth face coverings must be worn by every student unless s/he:*

- *Has a difficulty breathing*
- *Is unconscious or incapacitated*
- *Is unable to remove the face-covering without assistance*
- *Has special needs and may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the face covering, 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 face coverings throughout the school day?**

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

## **What happens if a student (other than those who are exempt, as set out above) refuses to wear a face covering?**

*A refusal by a student to wear a face covering 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 forwarded 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 face coverings?**

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

**Does reliance on compulsory face covering 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 face coverings?**

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

## **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?**

*There is currently no provision in the DES guidelines for taking the temperature of staff and/or students at school. Public health advice states that temperature checking is not recommended for children as fever is not a consistent symptom of COVID-19 in children. Parents/Guardians, students, teachers and other school staff should be reminded regularly by the school authorities that if they feel unwell and/or have ANY COVID-19 symptoms they should not attend school.*

## Underlying illnesses/conditions

### I have a pre-existing illness and do not feel safe returning to school. What do I do?

The HSE has classified underlying illnesses/conditions as putting persons at either Very High Risk or High Risk. You will need to establish which category you are in as different procedures apply to each. Therefore, you should consult the HSE lists of illnesses in advance of returning to school. The list of illnesses/conditions is available at <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/people-at-higher-risk.html>

Teachers should also read CL49/2020 'Coronavirus (COVID-19):Arrangements for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants employed in recognised Primary and Post Primary schools' available at [https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0049\\_2020.pdf](https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0049_2020.pdf)

### I have a condition/illness that puts me in the Very High Risk Category. What happens?

The HSE advice on the 'very high risk' groups can be found at: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/people-at-higher-risk.html>

If a teacher believes that s/he is in the Very High Risk Category, s/he must complete an online Occupational Health Service COVID-19 Risk Assessment immediately and submit it to the OHS (i.e. Medmark) as well as advising the employer (ETB/School) that they may fall into this category. The teacher does not have to disclose to school management the nature of the underlying illness/condition.

Having considered the medical information provided with the OHS Risk Assessment, the OHS will provide the employee with a 'COVID-19 Risk Assessment Report' which advises whether he/she is at a very high risk of serious illness from contracting COVID-19.

For teachers where the 'OHS Risk Assessment Report' advises that they are at a very high risk of serious illness from contracting COVID-19 and cannot attend the workplace, the Declaration Form at Appendix C of CL49/2020 must be completed by the teacher and returned immediately to the employer (i.e. school/ETB) accompanied by the OHS COVID-19 Risk Assessment Report. Where a medical diagnosis changes, the employee must inform the employer immediately.

If the OHS advises that you can work from home, the school must facilitate that request and you will continue to be paid as normal.

If the OHS advised that you are medically unfit for work due to a **non**-COVID-19 illness, the normal terms and conditions of the Sick Leave Scheme apply.

## How do I apply to Medmark for the COVID-19 Risk Assessment Report?

### Initial Procedure:

- *a detailed questionnaire is submitted to Medmark. Detailed medical evidence to provide further clarity with respect to the medical complaints in question is also submitted. All of this information is reviewed by a specialist occupational health physician, with care and detailed consideration. This includes an assessment of the combined and cumulative risk that can arise when an individual suffers from more than one health condition. The risk assessment is comprehensive and follows the same process that is being applied across other sectors. There is nothing happening in Education that is new or different from other places of employment.*
- *The outcome of the risk categorisation is in large measure governed by the HSE guidance. However, Medmark retains the discretion to place someone into the higher risk group if they feel they have more than one complaint and that their combination of risks warrants a higher categorisation. No individual is placed at a lower level of risk than that set out by the HSE standards.*
- *There is an obligation on the employer to examine the COVID-19 Response Plan in the school and ensure that all appropriate risk mitigation measures are in place.*

## I am not happy with the risk categorisation provided by Medmark. What can I do?

*Where an individual feels that they have been placed in an incorrect risk category, a review process has been put in place by Medmark.*

- *Members should email Medmark to request a review as follows:*
  - *Members send an email to [cork@medmark.ie](mailto:cork@medmark.ie)*
  - *In the Subject box they type in "Risk Assessment Review"*
  - *You may attach additional medical evidence should you wish to do so and should include your name and date of birth in the email*
- *The review will be undertaken by a team of four specialist occupational physicians who re-evaluate the medical evidence and deliver a consensus opinion on the risk categorisation. If someone is considered borderline, Medmark indicates that it is highly likely they will be given higher categorisation.*

## I am in the High Risk Category. What do I do?

*The HSE advice on the 'high risk' groups can be found at: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/people-at-higher-risk.html>*

*A teacher in the 'high risk' group who is not otherwise ill must attend the workplace, unless advised not to do so by the OHS.*

*If a teacher remains concerned, s/he may complete the Declaration Form at Appendix C of CL49/2020 and return it immediately to the employer (i.e. school/ETB) accompanied by the OHS COVID-19 Risk Assessment Report.*

*If a teacher in this 'high risk' group has been advised by OHS not to go to work, s/he will be facilitated to work from home.*

*If a teacher has been advised to go to work by OHS and s/he still has concerns and has been certified by a GP not to go to work, normal sick leave rules apply.*

## **I have been advised by OHS to work from home. What can my school management ask me to do?**

*The work assigned should be determined by your employer, in consultation with you, and may include relevant duties that support the work of the school in developing and delivering its programmes of teaching and learning for pupils.*

*For you, as a teacher, these duties may include:*

- *Liaising closely with and supporting the work of the substitute teacher(s) who becomes responsible for the teaching duties of the teacher on special leave with pay.*
- *Supporting and engaging (using online technology) with the work and progress of very high risk or extremely vulnerable pupils who are unable to attend school.*
- *Participating in staff meetings, team/subject planning meetings and all other normal meetings, using online technology.*
- *Participating in relevant professional development through online media.*
- *Developing aspects of the school's teaching resources or teaching plans.*
- *Undertaking administrative or other tasks associated with a post of responsibility (provided you have been properly appointed to hold the post in line with relevant DES publications) to the greatest extent possible using online technology.*

## **Caring/Childcare Responsibilities and Pregnancy**

### **Can I apply for Parental Leave or Carer's Leave if I have caring or childcare responsibilities or am living with a person/s with a high risk or very high risk of contracting COVID 19?**

*Yes. You are entitled to have a request to avail of existing, relevant leave entitlements considered by your school/ETB. In considering such applications, your school/ETB will take account of your school's policy on employee absences where the welfare and educational needs of the pupils must take precedence over all other considerations.*

More details on how to apply for Parental or Carer's leave is available at:  
[https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0054\\_2019.pdf](https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0054_2019.pdf)

## **I am pregnant. Am I required to attend work?**

*Under the current HSE guidelines, a pregnant employee is not deemed to be at very high risk of serious illness from contracting COVID-19, unless suffering from a serious heart condition, in which case alternative working arrangements will be put in place.*

*If a pregnant teacher remains concerned, she may complete the Declaration Form at Appendix C of CL49/2020 and return it immediately to the employer (i.e. school/ETB) accompanied by the OHS COVID-19 Risk Assessment Report.*

*If a pregnant teacher has been advised by OHS not to go to work, she will be facilitated to work from home.*

*If a pregnant teacher has been advised to go to work by OHS and she still has concerns and has been certified as ill by a GP not to go to work, normal sick leave rules apply.  
If a teacher has a pregnancy-related illness the normal rules for such illness apply*

## **I am pregnant. What are my general health and safety rights while at work?**

*The Safety, Health, and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 (S.I. No. 299 of 2007) place an obligation on the employer, as soon as it is notified by the teacher that she is pregnant, to assess any specific risk in the workplace to that teacher and to ensure that the pregnant, post-natal, or breastfeeding teacher (within a 26 week period after the birth of the child) is not exposed to any agents, processes or working conditions that will damage either the safety or health of the pregnant teacher and/or that of the developing child.*

*A teacher should be informed of the results of the risk assessment and the measures to be taken. The detailed arrangement regarding the respective responsibilities of the employer and the teacher in relation to Health and Safety Leave are contained in Sections 17 – 20 of the Maternity Protection Act 1994.*

*Where a risk has been identified and it is not possible to remove it, protective and preventive measures should be taken by the employer to safeguard the health and safety of any teacher to whom the provisions apply. Such measures may include:*

- *a temporary adjustment in the working environment of the teacher concerned so that exposure to the risk is avoided, or*
- *moving the teacher to suitable alternative work which does not involve the risk in the event that such adjustment is not possible, or*
- *granting the teacher Health and Safety Leave in the event that such alternative work is not available, having consulted with and received certification from the OHS. The teacher is entitled to receive, on request, a certificate stating the reasons she has*

*been granted leave. The certificate must also state the start date and expected end date of the leave.*

*Substitution for Health and Safety Leave will be paid by the Department/ETB.*

*Health and Safety Leave will cease when:*

- *the teacher concerned commences Maternity Leave, or*
- *the teacher is no longer an employee to whom Part III of the Maternity Protection Act, 1994 applies (i.e. she notifies the employer that she is not pregnant, has not given birth within the last 14 weeks or is not within 26 weeks of the birth and breastfeeding, as defined in the Act); or*
- *the risk ceases.*

*A teacher who makes PRSI contributions at the modified rate (Class D), and has no entitlement to Health and Safety Benefit from the DEASP, will be entitled to full pay while on Health and Safety Leave.*

*A teacher who makes PRSI contributions at the full rate (Class A) and who is entitled to Health and Safety Benefit from the DEASP will be paid full salary by the Paymaster for the first 21 days and thereafter will be paid full salary less any benefit paid by DEASP HSB1 Form.*

## **Additional Resources**

### **What additional resources have been provided by the Department of Education/Government to support schools in minimising the risk of spread of infection of COVID-19?**

*The following additional resources are being made available to post-primary schools in the free scheme and, on an application basis, to fee-charging schools:*

- *Funding to carry out minor works to enable a school to comply with the mandated health and safety measures – for example, optimising the use of available space while maintaining the minimum physical distancing of 1 metre, improving ventilation, procuring/renting additional accommodation, installing additional handwashing stations etc.*
- *A funding stream to allow schools to engage Aides to help management with the administration of COVID-19 related matters and with preparations for re-opening (e.g. reconfiguring classrooms and installing hand sanitising stations). A daily rate of €143.32 is payable to the Aide.*
- *Funding for additional supervision - €40m. Of this, €12.3m has already been paid to schools for the first term with the balance payable in 2021.*



*Engagement by teachers in this additional supervision is strictly voluntary and is entirely separate from and in addition to supervision commitments under the S&S scheme. An hourly rate is paid in respect of this additional supervision.*

- *Dedicated funding to support the implementation of enhanced cleaning regimes in schools. This is intended to allow for an extra 4 to 6 hours cleaning per day in schools.*
- *An additional 1,080 WTE teaching posts (inclusive of 120 Guidance Counselling WTEs) - costing €53 million.*

*The 120 guidance posts are to support student wellbeing. These posts will be ring-fenced for guidance provision and will bring guidance provision in schools back to pre-financial crisis levels.*

- *A dedicated funding stream to allow schools purchase hand sanitiser dispensers, hand sanitiser liquid, hand soap, disposable paper towels, wipes, gloves, face masks, face coverings, face visors, aprons, detergents etc.*

*Schools that are currently in the developing stage, i.e. schools that opened since September 2015, will have the additional supports calculated based on the projected enrolment for September 2020.*

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

**Schools are permitted to hire additional teachers – 1080 WTEs in all (representing an improvement of 0.6 in the Pupil Teacher Ratio). Given the huge crisis in teacher supply, where are schools going to get these teachers?**

*First and foremost a school/ETB is required to apply the mandatory sequence set out in Circulars 59/2016 and 49/2017. This means that, in the first instance, existing CID holders on part-time hours and then fixed term teachers on part-time hours must be offered hours for which they are qualified in the first instance. It should be noted that this includes Resource hours (Under Circular 06/2004, a teacher who is qualified - and registered – for a subject in the post-primary list of subjects is also deemed qualified to teach Resource hours).*

*To increase the availability of teachers, the TUI has secured:*

- *the suspension of the limits on the hours that can be worked by teachers on career break. In 2019/2020, 650 post primary teachers were on career break (in C&C and Voluntary Secondary Schools – ETB figures yet to be provided).*
- *a facility to allow teachers who are job sharing to work additional hours, if they choose to do so. In 2019/20, approximately 1,300 post primary teachers were job sharing (in C&C and Voluntary Secondary Schools – ETB figures yet to be provided).*

- Agreement that those in their second year of the PME programme can be engaged for paid substitution, paid supervision and paid teaching hours (over and above the unpaid PME placement hours).

### **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 CL59/2016 (ETB and C&C) and CL49/2017 (Voluntary Secondary Schools).

### **What sequence should be used for filling additional hours/posts that remain following application of CL59/2016 and CL49/2017?**

Any hours that are 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 hours are being treated as part of normal allocation and therefore will be filled under pro-rata fixed-term contracts.

### **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 now 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.*

### **The Government has decided to extend School Christmas Holidays, as a substitute teacher will I still get paid?**

*The Government has announced a three day extension to the School Christmas holidays. Where a substitute was engaged to cover a scheduled absence from 6th January 2021, schools should continue to record substitute claims to ensure payment to the substitute .*

## 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 under-paid basis for any such additional hours.***

*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 2020/2021 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.*

## 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.*

### 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.*

## Where can my school get assistance in preparing a COVID-19 Response Plan?

Details on what must be included in a COVID-19 Response Plan, including relevant templates, are set out in the COVID-19 Response Plan for the Safe and Sustainable Re-opening of Post Primary Schools”, available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7acad-reopening-our-post-primary-schools/>

## Who was involved in designing the DES 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 and Skills
- the TUI and the ASTI
- the school management bodies

## Training - Induction

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

Yes. The DES has published training videos for use in post-primary schools. The training videos address:

- COVID-19 training for all school staff in post-primary schools
- Lead Worker Representative induction
- Information on cleaning in schools
- COVID-19 training for school bus escorts
- COVID-19 training for SNAs

All the videos can be found here:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/dd7fb-induction-training-for-reopening-schools/>

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

All the posters can be found here:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/2da43-signage-for-reopening-of-schools/>

## Prior to returning to school

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

*Teachers must complete a Return to Work (RTW) Form which will be available from your school/ETB. This form must be returned to your school at least 3 days before returning to school.*

*You must also complete the COVID-19 induction training for all school staff in post-primary schools, available at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/dd7fb-induction-training-for-reopening-schools/>*

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

*Yes. COVID-19 signage has been provided to all schools. All the necessary PPE has also been available for schools to purchase. The TUI sought and secured a paid 'COVID-19 Aide' position (based on the Exam Aide model) to assist schools in this necessary preparatory work for schools to re-open.*

## Lead Worker Representative

### What is a Lead Worker Representative?

*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.*

### Does a LWR have any legal responsibilities?

*No. A Lead Worker Representative does not have any legal responsibilities in relation to COVID-19 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 schools*
- *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 concerns*
- *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. 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 2020/2021?**

*Yes.*

### **Can school management ask me to undertake 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.*

## **COVID-19 Diagnosis**

### **I have COVID-19 symptoms, should I attend school?**

*No, absolutely not. You have no discretion in this matter. You must not attend school.*

### **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 are the symptoms of COVID-19?**

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

### **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. On 28th August, the TUI issued guidance to members on the procedures for dealing with suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19 in schools. This advice can be found here: <https://www.tui.ie/news/procedures-for-dealing-with-suspected-and-confirmed-covid-19-cases-in-schools-hse-guidance.13824.html>*



## **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 Appendix A of CL49/2020 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 CL49/2020).*

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

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

## **How much special leave with pay am I entitled to?**

*Special leave with pay commences on the day that you develop symptoms of COVID-19 and notify your school/ETB.*

*It is considered by the Occupational Health Service (OHS – i.e. MedMark) that most recoveries will happen 14 days after the onset of symptoms. You must be 5 days fever free (which may run concurrently) before returning to work. It should be noted that the 14 days is from the onset of symptoms and not the date of receiving a positive COVID-19 test result.*

*Nonetheless, if symptoms persist you must keep in touch with your employer regarding the need for further leave which may be considered in consultation with MedMark.*

*These arrangements do not preclude an employee working from home at an earlier stage, if this is feasible, depending on the individual case.*

*When you return to work, you must be informed by the employer of the procedures in the school regarding social distancing, use of personal protective equipment and hand washing techniques.*

## How will COVID-19 Leave be recorded on the OLCS (DES On-line Claims System)

From the 6th January 2021, a staff member who has a COVID related leave can now have the absence recorded as a Personal Leave category under one of the following sub-headings:

- COVID - Self Isolation
- COVID – Diagnosis
- COVID – Very High Risk Group
- COVID – Restricted Movement

Up until now, all COVID-19 related leave absences were recorded as “Special Leave – Covid 19” on the OLCS. This category will no longer be available to record a COVID related leave record.

Any staff member who is on a COVID related absence, should now have their absence recorded under one of the four COVID leaves listed above. This arrangement commences from 6th January 2021.

## 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 Appendix A of CL49/2020 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 (Appendix to CL49/2020).

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 voice mail is working. Contact tracers will let you know that they have tried to contact you. They will call you a few times, if necessary.*

*If you are advised that you are a close contact, you will have to get tested for COVID-19. A contact tracer will arrange a COVID-19 test for you, even if you do not have symptoms.*

***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?**

*No. You should not attend.*

### **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 for 14 days 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. The 14 day period is from the last date of contact with the diagnosed person.*

*As with a diagnosis, you are advised to restrict your movements and you must arrange a COVID-19 test as soon as possible.*

*If you are advised to restrict your movements, you must complete the Declaration Form at Appendix B of Circular Letter 49/2020 and return it immediately to your school/ETB, accompanied by medical certification (GP/HSE) including the date of fitness to return to work. Where medical diagnosis changes, you must inform the employer immediately. 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 CL49/2020).*

### **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, for the 14 day period 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 set out above apply.*

## **Travel Abroad**

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

*The current Government advice is to avoid all non-essential travel.*

### **What happens if I need to travel abroad, i.e. if it is essential travel?**

*Any person coming into Ireland, (apart from those arriving from Northern Ireland and individuals arriving in Ireland from locations with a security rating of normal precautions - "Green List"), is required to restrict her/his movements for 14 days.*

*It is your responsibility to provide for the period of restricted movements arising from non-essential travel overseas. Therefore, if you intend to undertake non-essential travel overseas, you are required to make provision for the 14 day period of restricted movement. This may require an application to your school/ETB for Unpaid Leave, in line with the normal terms and conditions.*

*When you are absent on approved Unpaid Leave, you will not be paid. You must advise your employer in advance, in writing, of any travel abroad and include the travel details.*

## **If I travel abroad and am required to restrict my movements when I return, will I be paid?**

*No. You will be required to take unpaid leave.*

## **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.*

## **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.*

### **How should a school deal with a suspected case of COVID-19 in a school?**

*On 28th August, the TUI issued guidance to members on the procedures for dealing with suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19 in schools. This advice can be found here: <https://www.tui.ie/news/procedures-for-dealing-with-suspected-and-confirmed-covid-19-cases-in-schools-hse-guidance.13824.html>*

### **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 face coverings 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.*

*However, if those procedures are not applied in a fair 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.*

*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.

#### **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).

## **Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

**I teach a practical subject. Will guidance issue to assist me to teach my subject in a COVID-19-safe way?**

**Yes.** On 25 August 2020, the DES issued guidance for the teaching of practical subjects. This document is available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7acad-reopening-our-post-primary-schools/>

**Will adjustments be made to the Leaving Certificate/Junior Cycle/LCVP/LCA assessments, including examinations, project work etc.?**

**Yes.** On Friday 21 August 2020, the DES issued new Assessment Arrangements for Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate Examinations 2021. These arrangements are designed to take account of the disrupted learning experienced by students during the 2019/20 school year and can be found at:

<https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Curriculum-and-Syllabus/assessment-arrangements-junior-cycle-and-leaving-certificate-examinations-2021.pdf>

**Important points to note include:**

- For the Leaving Certificate Established examinations, there will be no change to the length of the written examinations. For subjects where the SEC issues project briefs during the 2020/21 school year, the intention is to generally issue these at least four weeks earlier than normal. Subjects with course work completion dates typically late in the school year, will be asked to submit this coursework two weeks earlier than normal as a contingency measure. In this context, teachers are encouraged to plan and undertake these projects as early as possible in the programme of study.

- *For Junior Cycle, the number of CBAs to be completed has been reduced and each student must complete only one CBA in each subject and short course. The dates for the completion of CBA1 has been extended into the new school year. Students taking the junior cycle final examinations in 2021 will not be required to complete Assessment Tasks for the relevant subjects. The grade descriptor awarded for these subjects will be based on the examination paper only. Specific arrangements have been put in place for Music, Art and Home Economics and are detailed in the relevant section.*
- *At Junior Cycle, adjustments have been made to the examination components of the following Junior Certificate subjects: Ancient Greek, Classical Studies, Jewish Studies, Latin, Religious Education, Technologies: Technology, Technical Graphics, Materials Technology - Wood and Metalwork.*
- *Adjustments have been made to the assessment arrangements for Year 2 LCA students.*
- *For LCVP, adjustments have been made to both the portfolio and the examination.*

### **I am the Transition Year Co-ordinator. How can this programme operate safely this year?**

*The DES has published guidelines specifically in relation to Transition Year. These guidelines will be regularly updated and can be found at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7acad-reopening-our-post-primary-schools/>*

### **I am the LCA Co-ordinator. How can this programme operate safely this year?**

*The DES has published guidelines specifically in relation to the LCA programme. These guidelines will be regularly updated and can be found at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7acad-reopening-our-post-primary-schools/>*

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

*The initial primary focus for all school is on re-opening for classes. Following consultation with staff, schools may decide to commence extra-curricular activities. 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.*

### **Can night classes still take place in my school?**

*Yes, provided the public health advice and Government/Department guidelines, including those in relation to cleaning, are followed. However, it is anticipated that, in many cases, night class provision will not proceed this year.*



## **I hold the post of **Director of Adult Education** and school management has decided not to proceed with night classes this year. What happens to my post?**

*The TUI has secured the agreement of the DES that the Schedule of Posts of Responsibility in night schools for the 2020/2021 school year will be based on the 2018/2019 enrolment. However, it is accepted that, in many instances, night schools might not proceed this year. Consequently, the TUI sought and secured confirmation that, in the event that self-financing night-school provision is suspended for the duration of the COVID-19 public health emergency, those with posts of responsibility in the night school will retain and be paid in respect of such posts.*

*It was further agreed that, under CL46/2000, the posts of responsibility in the night school will be protected and, in that context, duties can reasonably as be assigned in the day school to holders of such posts if night school provision does not proceed. These posts will revert to the night school when it reopens.*

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

*Communication with parents/guardians should, where possible, 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 and the meeting must take place in a room where social distancing of 2 metres can be maintained and that is cleaned before and after the visit.*

## **My school has students identified as Very High Risk, what are my obligations to those students?**

*On 7<sup>th</sup> September 2020, the DES published 'Continuity of schooling: Supporting post primary students who are at very high risk to COVID-19'. This document sets out a mechanism to address the educational needs of students in the very high-risk category.*

## **Inspections and School Self Evaluation (SSE)**

### **What changes have been made to school inspections and SSE owing to COVID-19?**

*Due to COVID-19, the third cycle of SSE, which had been due to commence in September 2020, will now commence in September 2021. Therefore, there will be no new SSE requirements for schools and centres for education in the school year 2020/21.*

*During the first term of the 2020/21 school year, the Inspectorate will focus on advisory, support and research work. Inspection activity will be confined to a small number of priority inspections, including: work to complete inspections commenced prior to 12 March 2020; a number of Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections; urgent Follow-through Inspections; and a limited number of other necessary inspections.*

## **Additional Supervision in Schools**

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

*Additional supervision will be required to 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 be used by schools this year and these will need to be supervised. Areas such as bathrooms and locker areas will also require extra vigilance.*

### **What funding has been provided for additional supervision?**

*The DES has provided over €40 million for post-primary schools to allow them to provide more supervision in schools this year.*

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

*No. Undertaking this additional supervision is strictly voluntary. 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 in 2019/2020.*

### **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 in any given week in 2020/21 that is over and above the weekly level of supervision you carried out under your contracted, compulsory S&S liability in 2019/20.*

### **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 2019/2020 you were, for example, undertaking 45 minutes of supervision per week (say, 30 mins at lunchtime and a 15 minute break) any additional supervision (i.e. above 45 minutes) undertaken in a given week in 2020/21 year, will be paid as additional supervision as provided for in CL53/2020 available at:*

[https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0053\\_2020.pdf](https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0053_2020.pdf)

### **If I am a Deputy Principal or Principal, can I opt to 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 2020/21 that is over and above the weekly level of supervision carried out by the teacher under their compulsory S&S liability in 2019/20.*

### **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 their 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.*

## **School Uniforms**

### **Should students wear school uniforms?**

*The wearing of school uniforms remains a matter for each school. Public health advisors have stated that there is nothing to suggest an increased risk for staff or students if a student wears a school uniform.*

*There is no evidence to suggest that asking children to wear freshly laundered uniforms/clothes every day is an effective measure to limit the spread of COVID-19. Current scientific evidence suggests that the virus that causes COVID-19 does not survive for long periods on soft, absorbent materials such as school uniforms. School uniforms/clothes should be laundered regularly in line with usual good hygiene. If uniforms/clothes are visibly dirty or soiled they should be laundered.*

*Schools could consider rotating sportswear (i.e. track suits) and uniforms on alternate days if an enhanced cleaning regime would be preferred by the parents/guardians.*

## **Supporting Documentation**

*Roadmap for the full return to school - published: 27 July 2020, available at:*  
<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/b264b-roadmap-for-the-full-return-to-school/>

*COVID-19 response plan for post primary schools – regularly updated, available at:*  
<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7acad-reopening-our-post-primary-schools/>

*Schools Pathway for COVID-19: The Public Health approach, Paper prepared by the Office of the Clinical Director, Health Protection, HSE – published 27 August 2020, available at:*  
<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7acad-reopening-our-post-primary-schools/>

## **Physical Distancing in classrooms**

*Framework to maintain Physical Distancing in the Classroom in Post Primary Schools – published: 27 July 2020, available at:*  
<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7acad-reopening-our-post-primary-schools/>

*Illustrative Classroom Layouts referenced in the Framework to maintain Physical Distancing in the Classroom in Post Primary Schools with a full return of all Students – published: 27 July 2020, available at:*

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7acad-reopening-our-post-primary-schools/>

## Ventilation

*Practical Steps for the Deployment of Good Ventilation Practices in Schools – published: 24 August 2020, available at:*

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7acad-reopening-our-post-primary-schools/>

## Teaching, Learning and Assessment

*Returning to school: Guidance on learning and school programmes for post primary school leaders and teachers – published: 27 July 2020, available at:*

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7acad-reopening-our-post-primary-schools/>

*Returning to School Transition Year 2020/21 – published: 27 July 2020, available at:*

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7acad-reopening-our-post-primary-schools/>

*Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) Advice for management and teachers of LCA 2020/21 in Second-Level Schools and Centres for Education – published: 27 July 2020, available at:*

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7acad-reopening-our-post-primary-schools/>

*Supporting the wellbeing of school communities as schools reopen - Guidance for schools – regularly updated, available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/52642-supporting-the-wellbeing-of-school-communities-as-schools-reopen-guidance-for-schools/>*

*Returning to school after COVID-19 school closure wellbeing toolkit for post primary schools Supporting the wellbeing of the school community – regularly updated, available at:*

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/0722b-wellbeing-resources/#wellbeing-toolkits-for-schools>

*Assessment Arrangements for Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate Examinations 2021 – published 21 August 2020, available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7acad-reopening-our-post-primary-schools/>*

*Arrangements for Inspection and Schools Self-Evaluation for the 2020/2021 School Year, available at: [https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0041\\_2020.pdf](https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0041_2020.pdf)*

*Return to School Guidance for Practical Subjects in Post- Primary Schools and Centres for Education – published 24 August 2020, available at:*

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7acad-reopening-our-post-primary-schools/>

*Continuity of schooling: Supporting post primary students who are at very high risk to COVID-19 – published 7 September 2020, available at:*

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7acad-reopening-our-post-primary-schools/>

## **Additional School Supports**

*0046/2020 - COVID-19 operational supports for the full return to school – available at:*

[https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0046\\_2020.pdf](https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0046_2020.pdf)

*Guidance for Post-primary Schools on PPE, Consumables and Equipment - published: 7 August 2020, available at:*

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7acad-reopening-our-post-primary-schools/>

*0053/2020 - Coronavirus (COVID-19): Additional Supervision Arrangements for the 2020/21 School Year – published 12 August 2020, available at:*

[https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0053\\_2020.pdf](https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0053_2020.pdf)

## **Terms and Conditions**

*0049/2020 - Coronavirus (COVID-19): Arrangements for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants employed in recognised Primary and Post Primary schools – published 7 August 2020, available at [https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0049\\_2020.pdf](https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0049_2020.pdf)*

*0054/2020 - Coronavirus (COVID-19): Arrangements for certain employees of recognised Primary and Post Primary schools in the Free Education Scheme and of ETBs, employed using grant funding – published 14 August 2020, available at:*

[https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0054\\_2020.pdf](https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0054_2020.pdf)

*Changes to the Job Sharing Scheme for Registered Teachers employed in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools - 2020/21 School Year – published 7 August 2020, available at:*

<https://www.education.ie/en/Education-Staff/Services/Breaks-Leave/Job-Sharing/ttc005-2020.pdf>

*Changes to the Career Break Scheme for Registered Teachers employed in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools 2020/21 School Year – published 7 August 2020, available at: <https://www.education.ie/en/Education-Staff/Services/Breaks-Leave/Career-Break/TTC007-2020.pdf>*

## Face Coverings

*Clarification on the use of face coverings in post-primary schools, published 16 September 2020, available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7acad-reopening-our-post-primary-schools/>*

## Health and Safety Controls for Students

*Template Health and Safety Control of COVID-19 Policy for Students, published 16 September 2020, available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7acad-reopening-our-post-primary-schools/>*

**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.**