Shay Bannon
Educational/Health
and Safety Consultant

THE RESPONSE PLAN

Sponsored by: **texta parent.ie**

"The Department of Education and Skills is working closely with the education partners to develop a centrally agreed Covid-19 Response Plan for schools. The plan will support the implementation of the requirements of the Government's 'Return to Work Safely Protocol' in school settings.

DES expect to be issuing guidance to schools early next week."

Letter to all primary schools from Secretary General Seán Ó Foghlú on Friday 19th June, 2020 (issued at 8.24pm)

Sponsored by: **texta parent.ie**

PURPOSE OF A COVID-19 PLAN – THE WHY?

- To support the staff and Board of Management in putting measures in place that will prevent the spread of Covid-19 in schools
- Outlines the policies and practices necessary for the re-opening of a school
- Incorporates current best practice and advice about measures to reduce the spread of Covid-19
- Supports the sustainable reopening of schools

Sponsored by: **texta parent.ie**

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

- Process and implementation of the plan will requires strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between the Board of Management, staff and parents
- Assistance and cooperation of the entire school community will be essential to ensure the success of the plan
- Failure to adhere to the safety procedures and policies outlined in the plan could result in increased risk and potential harm to individuals and the wider community
- Plan will be a live working document that will have to be reviewed and amended in light of new and updated guidance

Sponsored by: **texta parent.ie**

WHAT INFORMATION MIGHT BE INCLUDED?

Return to work plan

- Outline of the details necessary for the reopening of the school including applicable restrictions and control measures

Personal responsibility – this is central to success of the plan

- Staff, parents/guardians and visitors have a responsibility both as individuals and collectively to have due regard for their own health and safety and that of others and to assist with the implementation of the response plan and associated control measures

Sponsored by:

WHAT INFORMATION MIGHT BE INCLUDED?

Appointment of a Lead Worker Representative

- Framework to be agreed but key part of the role will be to ensure that Covid-19 measures are adhered to within the school
- Necessary training to be provided to the Lead Worker Representative

Irish Congress of Trade Unions documentation

Sponsored by:

WHAT INFORMATION MIGHT BE INCLUDED?

Safety Statement and Risk Assessment

- Risk assessment to be undertaken by the Board of Management (BOM) and the Safety Statement to be updated **to include all relevant Covid-19 specific control measures**

- Copy of the updated Safety Statement to be available to staff on the school website

Sponsored by: **parent.ie**

WHAT INFORMATION MIGHT BE INCLUDED?

Advice on how to help prevent the spread of the virus

- Staff to be kept informed of the most up to date advice from the public health authorities   https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/

- How to reduce the chance of getting infected by the coronavirus

- Information to be provided about high risk or vulnerable groups

Sponsored by: **parent.ie**

WHAT INFORMATION MIGHT BE INCLUDED?

Procedure for Returning to Work outlined along with follow up actions

All staff to complete a Return to Work (RTW) form.

Staff to be provided with details:

i. of the online Induction Training that they must complete

ii. of any additional health and safety measures applicable to facilitate the staff member's return to work

Sponsored by: **texta parent.ie**

WHAT INFORMATION MIGHT BE INCLUDED?

Control Measures

- Document will outlines a range of essential control measures that have been implemented by the BOM to reduce the risk of the spread of Covid-19 virus and to protect the safety, health and welfare of staff, pupils, parents/guardians and visitors as far as possible within the school

Staff have a legal obligation (under Section 13, of the SHW Act 2005) to comply with health and safety requirements and to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves, their colleagues and other parties within the workplace.

Sponsored by: **texta parent.ie**

WHAT INFORMATION MIGHT BE INCLUDED?

How to deal with a suspected case of Coronavirus

- Procedures outlined as to how the Board of Management will deal with a suspected case that may arise during the course of work

Staff Duties

- Outlines key staff duties to facilitate a safe return to work

Covid Leave

Provide details on Employment Assistance and Wellbeing Programme

Sponsored by: **texta parent.ie**

WHAT YOU DO NOT NEED TO DO!

You do not need to:

- prepare a Covid -19 response plan
- update your Safety Statement
- purchase PPE, sanitisers or disinfectants
- purchase signage or plan for physical and social distancing
- Prepare training or guidance for staff or pupils

Sponsored by: **texta parent.ie**

ippn
Leading and Learning

PREPARING – POSSIBLE ACTIONS?

Policies and procedures	- Bring response plan to the attention of all staff - Review of school policies – Code of Behaviour. Emergency Planning , etc. - Preparing and reviewing the arrangements for visitors and deliveries/suppliers - Review of Sign in-Sign out procedures (contact tracing) - Identifying an isolation area(s) - Review of First Aid procedures - Review of supervision arrangements after consultation with staff - Considering and preparing a cleaning plan for the school –schedule and plan for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection of school - Procedure for staff when handling books and equipment

Sponsored by: **texta parent.ie**

---

ippn
Leading and Learning

PREPARING – POSSIBLE ACTIONS?

Requirements for all areas within the school facility	- Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette protocols in place - Planning to have hand washing facilities and sanitisers in multiple locations. Where? Renovation of toilet areas? - Considering where necessary signage and posters might need to displayed for the management of Covid-19 – signs and symptoms of covid-19, hand hygiene, etc. - Reviewing breaktime and playtime arrangements - Consideration around additional waste collection points - Reviewing procedures for monitoring access to and egress from school facility

Sponsored by: **texta parent.ie**

PREPARING – POSSIBLE ACTIONS?

Staff	▪ Consulted about Covid-19 Response Plan and Safety Statement update ▪ Ongoing communication using virtual meetings until public health policy guidelines change
Parents/guardians and students	▪ On-going consultation prior to reopening ▪ Planning for 1st day return and wellbeing of children ▪ Preparation of updated information, guidance and procedures ▪ Consideration given to establishing additional systems for regular communication

Sponsored by: **texta parent.ie**

PREPARING – POSSIBLE ACTIONS?

Toilets	▪ Cleaning regime and how it will be recorded ▪ Are sufficient liquid hand-wash soap and sanitisers available? ▪ Consideration of additional training for cleaning staff
Costs and purchasing requirements	▪ What additional equipment will be required for classrooms? ▪ Planning for additional cleaning staff and/or increased contactor costs ▪ Additional cleaning and disinfectant materials ▪ Essential cleaning materials for staff i.e. wipes/disinfection products, paper towels, etc. ▪ Additional bins for waste disposal ▪ Training – First Aid. Might any additional training in infection procedures be required?

Sponsored by: **texta parent.ie**

CONCLUDING REMARKS

- The status of the current Covid-19 pandemic is ever changing and evolving.

- The resolution of some important issues and questions, in terms of solutions and procedures, rests outside the remit of individual schools and are dependent on guidance from the DES and other appropriate agencies. **These will have to be resolved before schools can reopen**

- Likely that school planning will have to be flexible and adaptive in order to accommodate and to respond to changes in government measures and medical guidance.

Sponsored by: texta parent.ie