



Covid 19 Response Plan



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1.0 Introduction and Amendment History

The Covid 19 Response Plan has been developed by Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim Education and Training Board (referred to as MSLETB throughout document) in line with “**Return to Work Safely Protocol**” which has been developed by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), the Health Services Executive (HSE) and the Department of Health.

Employer	Ballinode Community College	Sligo CFE
Address	Clarion Road, Sligo	
Principal in the Workplace	David McGuinness (P)	David Downey (DP)
Lead Worker Representative(s)	Andrea Gallagher	Gary Smith
Teaching and Learning or Administration?	T&L	
Number of employees	59	
Number of Employees who Deal Directly with the Public	59	
Phone:	071 9145480	
Email:	ballinododecollege@msletb.ie	sligocfe@msletb.ie

The Plan will be updated should new or amended guidance be released by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), the Health Services Executive (HSE) and the Department of Health.

The history of amendments is recorded below.

Date	Issue Number	Page Number	Reason
01.06 2020	1		First issue of the Covid 19 Response Plan

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2.0 COVID Policy Statement

MSLETB is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our employees, students, visitors and contractors and have developed a COVID-19 Response Plan. All employees are responsible for the implementation of this plan and a combined effort will help contain the spread of the virus.

MSLETB will:

- continue to monitor our COVID-19 response and amend this plan in consultation with our employees.
- provide up to date information to our employees on the latest public health advice issued.
- display information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and correct hand-washing techniques.
- provide an adequate number of trained worker representative(s) who are easily identifiable and put in place a reporting system.
- inform all employees of essential hygiene and respiratory etiquette and physical distancing requirements.
- adapt the workplace to facilitate physical distancing.
- keep a log of contact / group work to help with contact tracing.
- Provide induction training which must be attended/completed by all employees.
- develop a procedure to be followed in the event of someone showing symptoms of COVID-19 while at work or in the workplace.
- provide instructions for employees to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during work.
- intensify cleaning in line with government advice.

All managers/principals and employees will be consulted on an ongoing basis and feedback is encouraged on any concerns, issues or suggestions which can be done through the Worker Representative(s)

Signed:

Tom Grady
Chief Executive

Date: 01.07.2020

3.0 Legislation

Legislation has been introduced and amended to enable the government to implement controls and restrictions regarding COVID-19.

Legislation is under continual review as the pandemic develops but the main legislation established includes but is not limited to:

Health (Preservation and Protection and Other Emergency Measures in the Public Interest) Bill 2020
Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (COVID-19) Act 2020.

4.0 Symptoms of COVID 19

Infection with the virus that causes COVID-19 can cause illness, ranging from mild to severe, and, in some cases, can be fatal. It can take anything from 2 days up to 14 days for symptoms of coronavirus to appear. They can be similar to the symptoms of cold and flu.

- a fever (high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above).
- a cough - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry.
- shortness of breath or breathing difficulties.

For the complete list of symptoms, please refer to the HSE Website - <https://www.hse.ie>

Some people infected with the virus, so called asymptomatic cases, have experienced no symptoms at all.

5.0 How COVID Spreads

The virus that causes COVID-19 disease is spread from people in fluid and in droplets scattered from the nose or mouth of an infected person when the person with COVID-19 coughs, sneezes or speaks.

The fluid or droplets land on objects and surfaces around the infected person. Other people contaminate their hands by touching these objects or surfaces and then bring the virus into contact with their eyes, nose or mouth by touching them with their contaminated hands. COVID-19 can also spread if droplets from an infected person land directly on the mucous membranes of the eye, nose or mouth of a person standing close to them.

It is still not known how long the virus survives on surfaces in different conditions. The period of survival may vary under different conditions (e.g. type of surface, temperature, humidity of the environment).

Studies indicate that it can persist on surfaces for hours and up to several days in the absence of effective cleaning. Thorough and regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces is essential. If disinfection is required it must be performed in addition to cleaning, never as a substitute for cleaning. While people are most likely to pass on the infection when they have symptoms, current information suggests that some infected people spread the virus to others prior to developing or displaying symptoms themselves.

6.0 Responsibilities

MSLETB have appointed the following personnel for overall implementation of the plan.

- Pat Howley – Director.
- Orla Reilly – Head of Corporate Services.
- Mary McDonald – Government and Compliance Officer.
- Kieran Joyce – Human Resources

The following table should be completed by the location manager/principal to allocate location specific responsibility which can be delegated.

Task	Person(s) Responsible
Person(s) responsible for overall implementation of the plan.	David McGuinness
Identification and training of worker representatives.	David McGuinness / MSL ETB
Planning and Preparing to Return to Work.	David McGuinness
Control Measures.	David McGuinness, Barry Bree, Andrea Gallagher (LWR), Gary Smith (LWR)
COVID-19 Induction.	David McGuinness / MSL ETB
Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19.	David McGuinness David Downey
Cleaning and Disinfection.	Barry Bree, Des Skeffington, Brendan Henry
Employee Information.	David McGuinness
Return-to-work forms	David McGuinness

The measures necessary to minimise the risk of spread of infection rely on everyone taking responsibility for their actions and behaviours.

Ballinode Community College / Sligo CFE will encourage an open and collaborative approach with employees where issues and work activities can be openly discussed and addressed.

These new requirements will require coaching, positive reinforcement and engagement of everyone.

Disciplinary process will be implemented where deemed necessary.

MSLETB have utilised the services of external health and safety consultant to assist with the development of the COVID 19 response plan and risk assessments.

7.0 Lead Worker Representatives

Ballinode Community College / Sligo CFE has appointed lead worker representatives (LWR) to ensure that COVID-19 measures are strictly adhered to.

A checklist will be completed (Appendix A) with each LWR.

The names of the lead worker representatives will be covered in the localised Covid 19 induction/displayed on noticeboards in canteen and reception areas.

LWR's will receive training and information on the role and the measures that have been put in place to help prevent the spread of the virus and to highlight concerns, report defects, submit ideas and identify improvements in the workplace.

Management and the LWR's will work together to ensure that all the actions in the COVID 19 Management Plan and risk assessment are fully adhered to ensure the suppression of COVID-19 in the workplace.

Management will ensure regular communication with their worker representative(s), about the measures being put in place to address the exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace.

LWR's are involved in communicating the latest public/government health advice around COVID-19 in the workplace.

8.0 Communication and Training

Ballinode Community College / Sligo CFE will ensure regular communication and engagement with their employees about the measures being put in place to address the occupational exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace.

All employees will complete a COVID 19 induction training and each location will deliver a localised induction for employees.

Employees will be kept up to date as new or amended guidance on COVID 19 is released.

Communication in relation to COVID 19 will also be in the form of posters displayed throughout the premises.

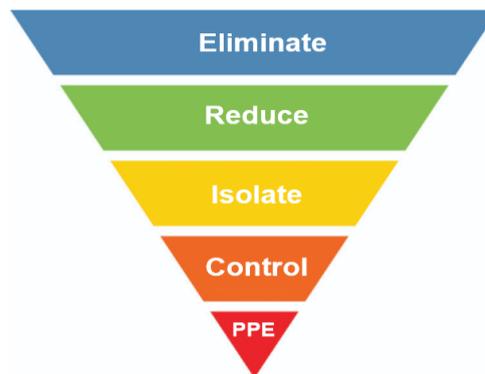
9.0 OH&S Documentation

MSLETB has updated their Safety Statement to include a section within the arrangements section to document control measures in relation to Covid 19.

A COVID 19 location risk assessment has also been developed to document the risk and control measures in relation to Covid 19 – see Appendix B.

The risk assessment will address the level of risk and how and to what sources of COVID-19 might employees be exposed, including students, visitors and contractors.

Hierarchy of Control (HoC) Measures



The risk assessment has been completed with consideration to the hierarchy of controls.

The risk assessment will also take into account employees individual risk factors and include the controls necessary to address the risks identified.

“Important: if you are in a vulnerable or higher risk category you should let your line manger know as soon as possible. Further information on people at higher risk from Coronavirus can be accessed [here.](#)” This information be factored into the risk assessment for the location.

The HoC will assist with the selection of control measures for the planned activity. Some measures are preferable to others and the hierarchy formalises this idea by providing a structured list of common options in order of preference. Start at the top, considering each option in turn and decide whether it is "reasonably practicable". For all levels below 'Eliminate', once you have selected the measures aimed at reducing the risk, consideration must be given to whether the residual risk is acceptable. If not, further measures will be required. In practice, this will mean that if you cannot eliminate the risk of COVID-19 transmission, you will have to consider control measures from other levels of the hierarchy.

In most cases more than one measure will need to be implemented. This is because:

- There are a number of different sources and transmission paths of COVID-19 that need to be controlled.
- There is a residual risk as one individual measure alone will not be 100% effective at controlling the risks (unless we can fully 'Eliminate').

10.0 Physical Distancing

Employees will be enabled to work from home were possible to reduce the number of employees on the premises. Employees will be expected to be on site in limited numbers to perform business essential tasks as requested by Line Management.

Employees will be organised into teams/groups who consistently work and take breaks together.

All workstations within the premises will be separated in conformance with government & NPHEH physical distancing guidelines.

Perspex screens will be installed where identified via the risk assessment.

Canteen facilities will form part of the location specific risk assessment to consider how physical distancing can be applied e.g. tables and chairs appropriately separated in line with physical distancing guidelines and staggering break and lunch times for employees and floor markings on canteen floor. In the event that canteen services resume self service facilities/areas will not be permitted and all food will be served.

There are Covid-19 physical distancing floor markings/signage and posters in place throughout the premises and employees will be reminded as part of the induction.

MSLETB have implemented a no handshake policy.

Note: The location risk assessment will document location specific controls that have been introduced in relation to physical distancing.

11.0 Personal Hygiene

Regular hand washing with soap and water is effective for the removal of COVID-19.

Hand sanitiser (which will be at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol) will be available at every entry to the premises.

All employees/visitors/contractors must sanitise their hands when entering the premises

Ballinod Community College / Sligo CFE will complete regular checks to ensure that there is sufficient stock of hand sanister/paper towels/soap.

Hand washing facilities with soap and hot water are available in the toilets.

Paper towels for drying of hands are available and are placed in a bin which is removed on a regular basis using correct hygiene measures and air hand dryers will be disconnected.

Employees must:

- ensure they are familiar with and follow hand hygiene guidance and advice.
- wash their hands with soap and water or with an alcohol-based hand rub regularly and after coughing and sneezing,
- when arriving/leaving workplace
- before and after eating,
- before and after preparing food
- before and after wearing gloves
- before leaving home.
- if in contact with someone who is displaying any COVID-19 symptoms,
- before and after being on public transport (if using it),
- before having a cigarette or vaping,
- when hands are dirty,
- after toilet use.
- after touching potentially contaminated surfaces
- if in contact with someone displaying any COVID 19 symptoms.

Employees have been instructed not share objects that touch their mouth, for example, bottles or cups.

In addition to hand hygiene, good respiratory hygiene and etiquette is also necessary.

Ballinode Community College / Sligo CFE will:

- provide tissues as well as bins/bags for their disposal.
- empty bins at regular intervals.
- provide advice on good respiratory practice

Employees must:

- adopt good respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette.
- Ensure they are familiar and follow respiratory hygiene guidance.

12.0 Cleaning

If the location uses the services of a cleaning company to clean the premises, they will be instructed on any enhanced cleaning regimes.

Ballinode Community College / Sligo CFE will be subject to cleaning at least twice daily.

Examples of the high touch areas that are required to be cleaned twice daily cleaning:

- Taps and washing facilities
- Toilets - flush and seat
- Doors, door handles and push plates.
- Handrails
- Light switches
- Alarm (Security/Fire) Panels
- Kettles/Coffee Machines
- Toasters
- Microwaves
- Fridge handles
- Dishwasher handles
- Window handles

Cleaners have been instructed to ensure reusable cleaning equipment (mop heads/non-disposable clothes) are clean before re-use and buckets are emptied and cleaned before re-use.

Ballinode Community College / Sligo CFE will operate a clear desk policy and employees have been issued with cleaning materials and must keep clean their workspace at least twice daily.

Employees are asked to ensure they do not leave personal items (e.g. mobile phones/car keys/bags) on communal surfaces.

Doors within **Ballinode Community College / Sligo CFE** will be propped open where possible to avoid the need to touch handles. Fire doors should not be propped open and doors should be propped open with door stoppers.

The LWR's will ensure cleaning regimes are being implemented and report to management any issues.

All soft furnishings in common and public areas have been removed (e.g. cushions) along with any newspapers/magazines/leaflets or brochures.

13.0 Meetings

Meetings should be held virtually, if meetings have to take place with the premises this should be with as few employees as possible and for as short a time as possible.

Tables and chairs within meeting rooms should be moved to ensure that they comply with physical distancing and hand sanitising should be provided at entrance to a meeting room.

There will be a sign placed on the door of the meeting room indicating the maximum capacity.

Note: meetings that last longer than two hours participants in such meetings would be classified as close contacts if one of the group then tested positive for Covid-19.

14.0 Managing Third Parties: Contractors and Visitors

Contractors and visitors will receive an induction in relation to the control measures that have been adopted within **Ballinode Community College / Sligo CFE** - see Appendix C.

The rules will be displayed at the entrance to the location and every contractor and visitor will be required to read the document before entering the building.

Anyone entering **Ballinode Community College / Sligo CFE** must use the hand sanitiser.

There is a log kept -See Appendix D of all contractors and visitors to enable contract tracing to be carried out in the event of a positive case of COVID-19 within **Ballinode Community College / Sligo CFE**.

This information is required only for tracing purposes and will be destroyed when a contractor/visitor is no longer at risk. (i.e. 14 days after the visit).

Contractors will be requested to provide risk assessments and method statements that cover the risk of COVID 19 associated with their activities.

15.0 Emergency Arrangements

Ballinode Community College / Sligo CFE will ensure they have a suitable number of first aiders and fire wardens (taking into consideration first aiders and fire wardens who are now working remotely). In the event that first aid is required in the workplace it may not be possible to maintain physical distancing.

First aiders have been provided with updated guidance – see Appendix E when delivering first aid.

Management will have to consider reviewing emergency evacuation procedures and consider additional fire assembly points to ensure physical distancing can be applied.

16.0 Remote Working

Setting up workstations/areas correctly at home is just as important as in the office, and the same principles apply.

Employees will be asked do they the right equipment and that it is set up correctly and to take regular breaks or change work activity.

For those that are using laptops at home employees have been encouraged to raise the laptop up rather than looking down at the screen.

For more detailed information on good positioning at the workstation the 'Position Yourself Well' guidance can be communicated to remote workers.

https://www.hsa.ie/eng/supports_for_business/faq's_in_relation_to_home-working_on_a_temporary_basis_covid-19_position-yourself-well-dse-ruler.pdf

If ergonomic concerns are identified by an employee working from home, they can inform their line manager/principal.

There is regular communication in place with employees working from home.

Additional guidance for employees on best practice on ergonomics and home workstations can be found below.

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/safetywellbeing/healthsafetyand%20wellbeing/safetystatementsandriskassessments.html>

17.0 Covid 19 Case Management

A Pre-Return to Work form – see Appendix F and must be completed at least 3 days in advance of the return to work.

This form should seek confirmation that employees, to the best of their knowledge, has no symptoms of COVID-19 and confirm that the employee is not self-isolating or awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test.

Employees must:

- complete and return the pre-return to work form before they return to work.
- inform their employer if there are any other circumstances relating to COVID-19, not included in the form, which may need to be disclosed to allow their safe return to work.
- self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they have any COVID-19 symptoms.
- stay out of work until all symptoms have cleared following self-isolation.

Employees should follow the latest government guidelines in relation to return from a holiday abroad and follow the required quarantine period on return.

18.0 Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19 in the Workplace

The following person(s) are responsible to deal with a suspected case:

- Ballinode Community College Name
- Ballinode Community College Name

Ballinode Community College / Sligo CFE will allocate an isolation room(s) for personnel who become symptomatic.

Ideally the room should be somewhere that an employee can be isolated behind a closed door and have a window for ventilation have the following items:

- Tissues, hand sanitiser, disinfectant and/or wipes.
- PPE - gloves, masks.
- Waste bin.

When accompanying a suspected case outside or to an isolation room the responsible person will keep at least 2m away and will ensure that all other employees also remain at least 2m away.

The suspected case will be provided with a mask and this must be worn when exiting the premises.

The suspected case will immediately be directed to go home, call their doctor for advice and follow that advice.

The suspected case will be advised to avoid touching people, surfaces and objects and also advised to cover their mouth and nose with disposable tissues provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bin provided. If the suspected case is unable to make their own way home, the responsible person should arrange transport to their home or to hospital as advised by a medical practitioner and public transport of any kind should not be used.

The responsible person will complete a report of the incident, (using IPB Incident Report Form See Appendix I) including an assessment of any necessary follow-up actions and ensure that these actions are carried out.

The isolation room(s) and any of the other work areas involved in the case will be cleaned- see Appendix H.

The personnel responsible to deal with a suspected case will also provide assistance if contacted by the HSE.

The prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a crucial step in reducing the risk of transmission.

Ballinode Community College / Sligo CFE will display information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, share up to date information on public health advice issued and provide instruction for employees to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during work.

Employees will:

- Make themselves aware of the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and monitor their own wellbeing.
- Self-isolate at home and contact their GP promptly for further advice if they display any signs or symptoms.
- Report to manager/principal immediately if any symptoms develop during work.

19.0 Confirmed COVID-19 Case at Work

If a confirmed case is identified, the HSE will provide the responsible persons with advice.

This may include:

- Any employee in close face-to-face or touching contact.

- Any employee talking with or being coughed on for any length of time while the employee was symptomatic.
- Anyone who has cleaned up any bodily fluids.
- Close friendship groups or workgroups.
- Any employee living in the same household as a confirmed case.

Those who have had close contact will be asked to stay at home for 14 days from the last time they had contact with the confirmed case and follow the home isolation information guidance. See Appendix G self-declaration for special leave with pay form which will be retained as part of personnel records for the appropriate period of time.

If they develop new symptoms or their existing symptoms worsen within their 14-day observation period they should call their doctor for reassessment.

Staff who have not had close contact with the original confirmed case do not need to take any precautions and can continue to attend work.

Note: Close contact is defined by the HSE as spending more than 15 minutes in total in face-to-face contact within 2m of an infected person in 1 day.

Return to Work

In the event of an employee either being a suspected / confirmed case of COVID-19 or a known close contact of a confirmed or suspected case, this protocol must be followed to ensure they are fit to return to work by means of self-declaration.

An individual must only return to work if deemed fit to do so and upon approval from their medical advisor and having coordinated with their line manager/principal.

20.0 Reporting Requirements if an employee contracts COVID-19

There is no requirement for an employer to notify the Health and Safety Authority if a worker contracts COVID-19. Diseases are not reportable under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Reporting of Accidents and Dangerous Occurrences) Regulations 2016 (S.I. No. 370 of 2016).

COVID-19 is reportable under the Infectious Diseases (Amendment) Regulations 2020 and would be reported by a medical practitioner.

21.0 Building Maintenance

Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM) Schedule will be kept up to date (e.g. fire alarm service records).

Air conditioning is not generally considered as contributing significantly to the spread of COVID-19, therefore switching off air conditioning is not required to manage the risk of COVID-19.

Ballinode Community College / Sligo CFE will ensure suitable control measures are in place to avoid the potential for Legionnaires' disease before they reopen.

22.0 Managing Mental Health and Wellbeing

MSLETB recognises that employees may encounter stress in the course of their duties and will ensure, in so far as is reasonably practicable, that work-related stress factors are managed as any other occupational hazard.

Employees also have a responsibility to care for their own health and mental wellbeing so as not to contribute adversely to their stress levels and should seek assistance from their doctor if required.

If an employee feels that they are being exposed to pressure at work that leads to stress likely to adversely affect their physical / mental health and / or their capacity to undertake their duties, they should approach their line manager/principal or their local HR Department.

The manager/principal and affected employee should discuss the issues in an honest and open manner. The manager/principal will identify any reasonable actions they feel appropriate and inform the affected employee of their intended actions.

All approaches received by management from employees will be treated with fairness and sensitivity and dealt with in confidence.

To help support employees through difficult times, MSL ETB has an Employee Assistance Programme(EAP) which is a confidential employee support service designed to support employees resolve personal or work related concerns, through telephone support, specialist information and telephone or face to face counselling.

Currently the EAP is provided by Inspire Workplaces who are an independent company. You can contact the EAP through a designated 24/7 Freephone helpline on **1800 817 435 (for all staff other than teachers and SNA's)** **1800 411 057 (for teachers and SNA's)** to access support covering a wide range of issues.

The EAP is completely confidential and voluntary, and we recommend anyone requiring support to use this worthwhile service.

Please note that the contract with the current provider of EAP will end on 26th July 2020 however any individual availing of Inspire Wellbeing's services will be allowed to complete their programme with them. MSL ETB HR Department will provide details of the new EAP provider once details are finalised.

Some additional resources that employees may find beneficial:-

- Health Ireland Covid 19 resources which have been developed to respond to the current conditions: <https://www.mentalhealthireland.ie/get-support/covid19/>
- The Government's "*In This Together Campaign*" also provides information on minding one's mental health as well as tips on staying active and connected and the website/link will be communicated to employees:
<https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/together/?referrer=/together/>
- Sophie Moran, Ibec has put together a light hearted article on 'working well from home' for the Wellness Roundup:
<https://ibecnetworks.newsweaver.com/ibeckkeepwell/1xyzi9hg2hi?lang=en&a=2&p=56755897&t=30094543>
- There are also some home exercise videos from Wellness Roundup:
<https://ibecnetworks.newsweaver.com/ibeckkeepwell/4vcd26hap3r?lang=en&a=2&p=56755897&t=30094543>

23.0 Business Travel

Employees travelling to work should use their own cars and travel alone, avoiding car sharing.

Those living very close to work will be encouraged to walk or cycle.

Meetings should be held virtually avoiding the need to travel for business and travelling should only be a last resort if the meeting cannot be held virtually.

Public transport should be avoided with the preference being for employees to use their own cars if possible.

24.0 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Ballinode Community College / Sligo CFE will provide PPE to employees in accordance with identified COVID-19 exposure risks and in line with public health advice and train employees in the proper use, cleaning, storing and disposal of PPE. PPE should never be shared.

See below for the correct method for the disposal of gloves.

- Pinch and hold the outside of the glove near the wrist area.
- Peel downwards, away from the wrist, turning the glove inside out.
- Pull the glove away until it is removed from the hand and hold the inside-out glove with the gloved hand.
- With your un-gloved hand, slide your fingers under the wrist of the remaining glove, taking care not to touch the outside of the glove.
- Again, peel downwards, away from the wrist, turning the glove inside out.
- Continue to pull the glove down and over the inside-out glove being held in your gloved hand.
- This will ensure that both gloves are inside out, one glove enveloped inside the other, with no contaminant on the bare hands.



Where gloves are necessary, they will not be considered a substitute for hand hygiene and hands must be cleaned whenever gloves are removed.

Currently masks only need to be worn when dealing with a suspected case or when delivering first aid. Face visors that have been issued to first aiders will be marked with their name and it must not be shared with another first aider.

First aiders will disinfect and clean their face visor after use.

There are bins provided in which employees can place used masks and gloves. These bins will be removed after each shift and replaced using proper hygiene controls.

Date of Publication: 19th August, 2020

Appendices: (All published as separate documents)

1. Appendix A – Lead Worker Representative Checklist
2. Appendix B – COVID 19 Location Risk Assessment
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