



COVID-19 Response Plan for Parents/Guardians

**Belmayne Educate Together Secondary
School.**

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Introduction

It is important that the resumption of school based teaching and learning and the sustainable operation of Belmayne ETSS complies with the public health advice and guidance documents prepared by the Department. Doing so minimises the risk to students, staff and others. COVID-19 response plan is a living document and will be updated in line with the public health advice and any other relevant agreement with education partners as appropriate for post primary schools. The assistance and cooperation of all staff, students, parents, contractors and visitors is critical to the success of the plan.

All staff, students, parents, contractors 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 Belmayne ETSS COVID-19 Response Plan and associated control measures.

Planning and Preparing for Return to School

The BOM of Belmayne ETSS will ensure the following takes place before the students return to Belmayne ETSS on Friday 27th August.

- Ensured that new staff have completed the COVID-19 Induction Training provided by the Department of Education and all staff have completed the Return to Work (RTW) form.
- Appointed a Lead Worker representative - Dan O'Grady
- Displayed posters and other signage to prevent introduction and spread of COVID-19
- Updated the health and safety risk assessment
- Made necessary arrangements to restrict access to the school and maintain records of contacts to the school

Lead Worker Representative

The COVID-19 response Plan provides for the appointment of a Lead Worker Representative (LWR) in Belmayne ETSS. The LWR will work in collaboration with the Belmayne ETSS management team to assist in the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and monitor adherence to those measures and to be involved in communicating the health advice around COVID-19 in the workplace. The Belmayne ETSS Lead Worker Representative is **Dan O'Grady**. You can contact Dan O'Grady with any COVID-19 concerns you may have.

Signage

Belmayne ETSS will display signage, in prominent areas such as offices, classrooms and toilets, outlining the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and to support good hand and respiratory hygiene. Please see the link below to these posters.

<https://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Announcements/information-for-schools-preschools-and-third-level-institutions-on-the-coronavirus.html#1>

Changes to School Layout

Maintaining physical distancing in the school environment is recommended as one of the key control measures to minimize the risk of the introduction and spread of COVID-19. The classrooms in Belmayne ETSS have been reconfigured to ensure a 1 metre space between all staff and students. Other furniture items have been ordered so that classes can take place outside when possible.

Health and Safety Risk Assessment

COVID-19 represents a hazard in the context of health and safety in the school environment. Belmayne ETSS will review our emergency procedures involving fire safety, first aid, accidents and dangerous occurrences to consider any new risks that arise due to the school's COVID-19 Response Plan. Any changes to the school's existing emergency procedures will be documented and incorporated into the school's safety statement.

Access to School and Contact Log

Arrangement for necessary visitors such as contractors and parents will be restricted to essential purposes and limited to those who have obtained prior approval from the principal. The Department of Education Inspectorate may also need to visit schools and centres for education to support them as appropriate in the implementation of public health advice relating to creating a safe learning and working environment for all.

The prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a crucial step in restricting the spread of the virus and protecting the health and safety of the individuals themselves and other staff, contractors and visitors at the workplace. A detailed sign in/sign out log of those entering the school facilities will be maintained. The school will maintain a log of staff and students' contacts.

All school records and data will be maintained and processed in compliance with the GDPR and the Data Protection Acts.

Control Measures to prevent Introduction and Spread of COVID-19

The management team will:

- Advise staff and students that have symptoms not to attend school, to phone their doctor and to follow HSE guidance on self-isolation;
- Advise staff and students not to attend school if they have been identified by the HSE as contact for a person with COVID-19 and to follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement;
- Advise staff and students that develop symptoms at school to bring this to the attention of the principal (or deputy principal if the principal is unavailable) promptly;
- Ensure that staff and students know the protocol for managing a suspected case of COVID-19 in school;
- Advise everyone entering the school building that they need to perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser;
- Advise all relevant parties that visitors to the school during the day should be by prior arrangement with the principal. No one should attend the school without prior permission from the principal.
- Physical distancing of 2 metres will be maintained between staff and visitors where possible.

Know the Symptoms of COVID-19

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms. They are:

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

It can take up to 14 days for symptoms to show. They can be similar to symptoms of cold and flu. If you have any common symptoms of COVID-19 (coronavirus), self-isolate (stay in your room) and phone your family doctor straight away to see if you need a free COVID-19 test. Getting an early diagnosis means, you can get the help you need and take steps to avoid spreading the virus, if you have it. For the complete list of symptoms, please refer to the HSE Website. If you do not have symptoms, you can get a free COVID-19 (coronavirus) test at a COVID-19 walk-in test centre.

Respiratory Hygiene

The Belmayne ETSS will promote good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your bent elbow when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately and safely into a nearby bin. By following good respiratory hygiene, you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and COVID-19.

Hand Hygiene

Belmayne ETSS will promote good hygiene and display posters throughout the schools on how to wash your hands. For further information follow the HSE guidelines on handwashing:

<https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html>

Frequency of Hand Hygiene

Students and staff should perform hand hygiene:

- On arrival at school;
- Before putting on, adjusting or removing face coverings;
- Before eating or drinking;
- After using the toilet;
- After playing outdoors;
- When their hands are physically dirty;
- When they cough or sneeze.

Physical Distancing

Physical distancing will be applied in Belmayne ETSS. It must be applied in a practical way to recognise that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on this issue. Care should be taken to avoid generating tension or potential conflict and some flexibility in the implementation of measures may be required at time.

It is also recognised that it is not always possible for staff to maintain physical distance from students and it is not appropriate that they would always be expected to do so where this could have a detrimental impact on the student.

However where possible staff should maintain a minimum of 1 m distance and where possible 2m. They should also take measures to avoid close contact at face to face level such as remaining standing rather than sitting beside/crouching down.

Physical distancing falls into two categories:

- Increasing separation
- Decreasing interaction

Increasing separation

- All students will be seated 1m apart with all unnecessary furniture removed from the classrooms.
- Lockers will be removed from the classrooms to avoid the congregation of students. Students will not have access to lockers for the 2020/2021 academic year.
- Students will be taught in base classes where possible. Where this is not possible, for example during option classes, cleaning equipment will be provided to allow desks & chairs to be wiped down and sanitized.

Decreasing interaction

- Students will remain in the classroom and teachers will move between rooms as far as possible and practical.
- Students will have the opportunity to get some fresh air and sanitise their hands between each class.
- Windows and doors will be left open in all classrooms to ensure all classes are well ventilated as much as possible.
- Where students have an option subject they will move quickly into the new class and would be seated with members of their base class, observing as much physical distance as possible.
- Hand washing and/or sanitising will be required when moving between classes by teachers and students.
- Physical distancing between the teacher and class will be observed.
- Social physical contact (hand to hand greetings, hugs) will be discouraged.
- Staff and students will avoid sharing personal items.
- Where teaching and learning involves use of shared equipment, this equipment will be cleaned regularly and hand hygiene encouraged.

Physical Distancing outside of the classroom and within the school

- Arrangements for dropping off/collecting students should be arranged to maintain physical distancing of 2m where possible. Parents and Guardians are not allowed past the gate of the school unless they have a pre arranged appointment.
- Walking/cycling to school should be encouraged as much as possible.
- Students will go straight to their designated base class.

Ventilation

The Department has published guidance setting out the practical steps for good ventilation in accordance with public health advice 'Practical Steps for the Deployment of Good Ventilation Practices in Schools' The guidance sets out an overall approach for schools that windows should be open as fully as possible when classrooms are not in use (e.g. during break-times or lunch-times (assuming not in use) and also at the end of each school day) and partially open when classrooms are in use. The guidance provides that good ventilation can be achieved in classrooms without causing discomfort, particularly during cold weather. The Department has also published guidance on how these practical steps measures can be supplemented and enhanced by the use of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) monitors. Links to all aforementioned guidance can be accessed [here](#).

Use of PPE in Schools

Masks

Masks/Face Coverings act as a barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from travelling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the face covering coughs, sneezes, talks or raises their voice. Cloth face coverings are therefore intended to prevent transmission of the virus from the wearer (who may not know that they are infected) to those with whom they come into close contact.

Therefore all teachers, staff and students attending Belmayne ETSS will wear a face covering when a physical distance of 2m from other staff or students cannot be maintained. **All members of the Belmayne ETSS community must provide their own face covering and ensure to educate themselves on the proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings.**

Cloth face coverings will not be worn by any of the following groups:

- 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 must be provided to the school where an exemption is sought on the above grounds. There is no capacity for schools to deviate from either the requirement to wear face masks or the exemptions that apply.

Further advice from the HPSC on the use of face masks in educational settings was received on the 6th August 2020. This advice is available [here](#).

Please contact our Lead Worker Representative, Dan O'Grady if your son/daughter has any concerns in relation to wearing the face mask.

All staff and students wearing face coverings will be reminded to not touch the face covering and to wash or sanitise their hands (using hand sanitiser) before putting on and after taking off the face covering. Information will be provided on the proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/aac74c-guidance-on-safe-use-of-face-coverings/>

All teachers and staff will be aware that they should wash or sanitize hands (using a hand sanitizer) before and after helping a student put on or adjust a face covering. Face coverings should be stored in a space designated for each student that is separate from others when not being worn (e.g., in individually labelled containers or bags). Cloth face coverings should be washed 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 as this can make breathing difficult. Belmayne ETSS will have additional disposable face coverings available for students, teachers, and staff in case a back-up face covering is needed during the day. **Wearing a face covering or mask does not negate the need to stay at home if symptomatic.**

Gloves

The use of disposable gloves in the school by students or staff is not generally appropriate but may be necessary for matters such as cleaning or intimate care settings. Routine use does not protect the wearer and may expose others to risk from contaminated gloves. Routine use of disposable gloves is not a substitute for hand hygiene.

Impact of COVID-19 on certain school activities

Currently Belmayne ETSS plan to run extra curricular activities but this may change under the advice of the Department of Education.

Choir/Music Performance

Choir practices/performances and music practices/performances involving wind instruments may pose a higher level of risk and special consideration should be given to how they are held ensuring that the room is well-ventilated and the distance between performers is maintained.

Sport Activities

Schools should refer to the HPSC guidance on Return to Sport. Link to return to sport protocols is found here.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/07253-return-to-sport-protocols/>

Shared Equipment

Art – Where possible students should be encouraged to have their own individual art and equipment supplies.

Electronics – Shared electronic devices such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards should be cleaned between use and consideration could be given to the use of wipeable covers for electronics to facilitate cleaning.

Musical Equipment/Instruments – To the greatest extent possible, instruments should not be shared between students and if sharing is required, the instruments should be

Library Policy – Where practical students should have their own books. Textbooks that are shared should be covered in a wipeable plastic covering that can be wiped with a suitable household cleaning agent between uses. Students should be encouraged to perform hand hygiene after using any shared item.

Shared Sports Equipment – Minimise equipment sharing and clean shared equipment between uses by different people.

Hygiene and Cleaning in Schools

The Department of Education will provide additional funding to Belmayne ETSS to support the enhanced cleaning required to minimise the risks of COVID-19. reopening. Belmayne ETSS will be cleaned at **least once per day**. Additional cleaning will be focused on frequently touched surfaces – door handles, chairs, desks, sink and toilet facilities.

All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area. Under no circumstances should these cleaning materials be removed from the building. Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day.

Cleaning/Disinfecting rooms where a student/staff member with suspected COVID-19 was present

- Once the room is vacated the room will not be reused until it has been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry.
- Disinfection only works on things that are clean. Therefore when disinfection is required it is always in addition to cleaning.
- Person/s assigned to cleaning will avoid touching their face while they are cleaning and wear household gloves and a plastic apron.
- Clean the environment and furniture using disposable cleaning cloths and a household detergent followed by disinfection with a chlorine based product (household bleach).
- Pay special attention to frequently touched surfaces, the back of chairs, couches, door handles and any surfaces that are visibly soiled with body fluids.
- Once the room has been cleaned and disinfected and all surfaces are dry, the room can be reused.

Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19

Staff or students should not attend school if displaying any symptoms of COVID-19. The following outlines how Belmayne ETSS will deal with a suspected case that may arise in a school setting. A designated isolation area has been identified within the school building which is our well-being room.

If a staff member/student displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school the following are the procedures to be implemented:

- If the person with the suspected case is a student, the parents/guardians will be contacted immediately;
- The person will be accompanied to the well-being room keeping at least 2 metres away from the symptomatic person and also making sure that others maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from the symptomatic person at all times;
- If it is not possible to maintain a distance of 2m a staff member caring for a student should wear a face covering or mask. Gloves should not be used as the virus does not pass through skin;
- Assess whether the individual who is displaying symptoms can immediately be directed to go home/be brought home by parents and call their doctor and continue self-isolation at home;
- Facilitate the person presenting with symptoms to remain in the well-being room if they cannot immediately go home and facilitate them calling their doctor. The individual should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects. Advice should be given to the person presenting with symptoms to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissue provided when they cough or sneeze and put the tissue in the waste bag provided;
- If the person is well enough to go home, arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible and advise them to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used;
- If they are too unwell to go home or advice is required, contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a COVID-19 suspect;
- Carry out an assessment of the incident which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery;
- Arrange for appropriate cleaning of the well-being room and other areas involved.

The HSE will inform any staff/parents who have come into close contact with a diagnosed case via the contact tracing process. The HSE will contact all relevant persons where a diagnosis of COVID-19 is made. The instructions of the HSE should be followed and staff and student confidentiality is essential at all times. **Belmayne ETSS will not automatically close if there is a suspected case of COVID-19 but will follow the advice of the HSE and The Department of Education.**

Dealing with a suspected student case of COVID-19 in Belmayne ETSS

A student may report feeling unwell, with relevant symptoms, or a member of staff observe that a student is displaying symptoms which may indicate COVID-19. If a student displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school the following are the procedures to be implemented:

- The member of staff who considers that the student may be a suspected case of COVID-19 should ask the student to accompany them to the isolation room, wearing their mask as normal, and bring their belongings with them.
- Staff members should remain calm and reassuring at all times. Remind the student that if they are not at fault or “in trouble”, whether or not they have COVID-19, and that by complying with the procedure they are helping to protect and care for their community. Thank the student for their cooperation.
- The staff member should walk 2 metres in front of the student and open any doors/move any objects as necessary to minimise the student’s interaction with surfaces.

- On arriving at the wellbeing room, the staff member should check no students or staff are within two metres of the entrance to the room (ask any students within 2 metres of the door to stand outside for a few moments if necessary) and then open the door to allow the unwell student into the isolation room.
- Check that the unwell student is comfortable and has everything they need (tissues, spares masks, wipes etc are available in the isolation room) and let them know that you are going to go and tell the principal or deputy principal that they are in the wellbeing room. The principal/deputy principal will take care of them from that point.
- Alert the principal and/or deputy principal that there is a suspected case of COVID-19 in the school and that there is a pupil in the isolation room.
- The principal/deputy principal will contact the parents/guardians, and arrange for the student to go home if they are well enough (or contact emergency services if they become acutely unwell).
- The staff member should return to their classroom and evacuate all students from the room to allow for cleaning. The lesson should continue, if possible, using an empty classroom (if available), or benches, z-tools or picnic tables in the outside spaces.

In the event there is more than one suspected student case of COVID-19 at the same time, additional students should remain in the outdoor spaces, at least 2 metres away from other people, while their parents/guardians are contacted.

COVID-19 Policy Statement

Belmayne Educate Together Secondary School is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our staff and a safe learning environment for all our students. To ensure that, we have developed the following COVID-19 Response Plan. The BOM and all school staff are responsible for the implementation of this plan and a combined effort will help contain the spread of the virus. We will:

- continue to monitor our COVID-19 response and amend this plan in consultation with our staff
- provide up to date information to our staff and students on the Public Health advice issued by the HSE and Gov.ie
- display information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and correct hand-washing techniques
- agree with staff, a worker representative who is easily identifiable to carry out the role outlined in this plan in relation to summer provision
- inform all staff and students of essential hygiene and respiratory etiquette and physical distancing requirements
- adapt the school to facilitate physical distancing as appropriate in line with the public health guidance and direction of the Department of Education
- keep a contact log to help with contact tracing
- ensure staff and students engage with the induction / familiarisation briefing provided by the Department of Education
- implement the agreed procedures to be followed in the event of someone showing symptoms of COVID-19 while at school
- provide instructions for staff and students to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during school time
- implement cleaning in line with Department of Education advice

All school staff will be consulted on an ongoing basis and feedback is encouraged on any concerns, issues or suggestions. This will be done through the Lead Worker Representative, who will be supported in line with the agreement between the Department and education partners.

Parent/Guardian Checklist:

- Ensure to keep up to date and follow public health advice.
- Ensure to follow government guidelines in relation to restricted movement after any travel outside Ireland.
- Ensure that your son/daughter does not attend school if he/she is displaying any signs of COVID-19.
- Ensure that your son/daughter has a face covering and their own hand sanitizer for use in school.
- Ensure that your son/daughter has a designated small plastic bag, clearly labelled, for their face covering when not in use.
- Ensure that your son/daughter has their own resources for school. Green pen, Red pen and Blue/Black pen, Pencil, Gluestick, Colouring Pencils, Small scissors
- Be available or ensure someone is available to collect your son/daughter from school if they become unwell.
- Ensure your son/daughter understands how to clean and sanitize their hands correctly.
- Ensure your son/daughter follows good respiratory hygiene. This means covering the mouth and nose with a tissue or bent elbow when they cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately and safely into a nearby bin.
- Encourage your son/daughter to practice physical distancing at all times.
- Contact the Lead Worker Representative, Dan O'Grady, if you or your son/daughter has any concerns in relation to COVID-19.
- Do not come into the school without prior permission from the principal. Please ensure to wear a facemask if you do have an appointment in the school.
- Continue to encourage son/daughter to Stand Proud, Aim High, Be Respectful and make No Excuses during this difficult time in their young lives.