

GUIDANCE FOR THE RE-OPENING OF PARISH CENTRES AND OTHER FACILITIES



Creating a Practical Parish COVID-19 Response Plan

DIOCESE OF KILDARE AND LEIGHLIN

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Introduction

In recent days we marked five months since the first case of Covid-19 in Ireland. So much has happened in our world, in our country, in our parishes over these past five months. Everything we do now is done in the context of remembering those who sadly died because of the virus, remembering their loved ones, remembering those still living with the virus and endeavouring as a church community to protect ourselves from contracting or spreading the virus.

I am very aware that many resources have come from the Diocese over recent weeks as together we gently and gradually return to public worship. I am witnessing at first hand the mammoth task undergone across the diocese as I visit a different parish every day. Thank you to the priests, the parish pastoral councils, the parish covid-19 teams and the army of volunteers who have stepped up to the mark to ensure our churches are sanitised, stewarded and socially spaced for the protection of all. While our churches have opened and congregations are cautiously returning; we are all aware that there are more parish facilities that we may need to consider reopening over the next while.

This guidance document from the Diocesan Covid-19 Support Team, who advise me, addresses the reopening of such facilities. It is purposefully being sent to every parish. While not every parish has a parish centre, they may have an office, a shop, a meeting room, a childcare centre, a scouts den or some other facility that is open to the general public. It would be a serious dereliction of duty if we didn't offer guidelines and indicators on how we should prepare and ensure these facilities are ready for public use on an ongoing basis.

Like our churches, this is a serious piece of work. While this document may at first glance seem detailed, on reading it you will quickly realise it is common sense, practical and realistic. Much of what is contained here you may already be doing and if so this is an affirmation of your work. For others it may be a template of the journey you need to take over the next while. While the essentials are clearly outlined on pages 4-5, what follows are key resources that make such reopening possible and safe.

With deep appreciation and thanks for all your work at this time,

+Denis Nulty

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GUIDANCE FOR RE-OPENING PARISH CENTRES AND OTHER FACILITIES

Creating a Practical COVID -19 Response Plan

If not already in place, parishes will need to put in place protocols for the safe re-opening and use of their facilities by staff, volunteers and outside bodies. In many instances parishes will decide that they are not yet ready to fully open up some or all of their facilities, particularly to outside groups, having taken into consideration the limitations of space, finance and personnel. This decision has to be made locally.

The government guidance offered to the community and voluntary sector anticipates that every organisation has a COVID-19 Response Plan. In order to assist parishes in achieving this, the diocese is offering this set of resources for use locally. The information found here is mainly drawn and adapted from government advice for developing a COVID-19 Response plan. This advice can be found on the following website: www.pobal.ie/reopeningyourservice/ Parishes are welcome to access this website to augment the resources found in this diocesan document.

What is in this document: This document provides the parish with an outline of the steps required in formulating, implementing and monitoring a COVID-19 response plan for the (phased) safe re-opening of parish centres and other parish facilities. Under different resource sets, it details areas that need to be included in the local parish plan and provides checklists that can be used for planning and monitoring.

What is a COVID-19 Response Plan: A COVID-19 response plan is a record of the planning and preparation that have been undertaken to ensure the safe re-opening and continued operation of the parish centre and other parish facilities, for example office, hall, meeting rooms, shop. The plan demonstrates that local assessments have been made, and actions and procedures put in place that are monitored and under constant review for adaptation as needed. Keeping a record of the plan focuses parishes on the necessary initial and on-going work required; it also provides evidence of due diligence, if and when required. The plan is a living document that should be reviewed regularly.

To this end, every parish should have a dedicated **COVID-19 Response Plan** on paper and/or electronic file, to keep all the information in one place. As parishes have already put in place protocols for the opening of churches, it will be helpful to include a record of the measures taken in this regard in the dedicated COVID-19 file.

Areas in a parish Covid-19 response plan for opening up parish centres and facilities include the following:

A COVID-19 Policy Statement: This one page policy is signed by the Parish Priest and displayed in the parish centre. The statement outlines the commitment of the parish to implementing the response plan and the protocols involved. A template is provided here ([Resource set 1](#)). It serves as a good summary of the key areas that need to be planned.

Responsible Person(s) for COVID-19: Each parish should designate a person (or persons) to oversee and monitor COVID-19 protocols in parish facilities. If necessary, different areas of responsibility may fall to different people, including that of Lead Worker Representative. Staff and volunteers should be aware of who has particular responsibilities in relation to COVID-19. The areas and tasks are identified in ([Resource set 2](#))

Returning to work or volunteering: Government protocols for staff and volunteers safely returning to their roles have been put in place and many parishes are already familiar with these. The necessary resources for parishes are repeated here. (Resource set 3)

Control measures in parish facilities for staff, volunteers and users: These measures include what the parish will put in place locally in regards to hand hygiene /sanitising; respiratory hygiene; physical distancing; minimising of contact; considering at-risk staff and volunteers; contact tracing ; determining the opening of facilities for parish activities and for use by outside bodies. (Resource set 4) Under this section careful consideration will need to be given to the opening up (or not) of facilities, such as meeting rooms in the parish centre, for rental or otherwise by outside users. A form for completion by those using or renting facilities is included.

Induction training of staff and volunteers: Staff and volunteers need to be informed of what has been put in place in parish facilities and updated on new ways of working and operating. This induction should be carried out in a safe manner with physical distancing measures in place. Attendance at a COVID-19 induction will be recorded and records kept. The range of content and resources for an input for staff and volunteer induction can be found in (Resource set 5).

Communication: Communication is a vital component of any parish COVID-19 response plan. Under communication comes mechanisms for communicating with staff and volunteers, posters and signage, necessary communications to visitors and facility users. (See Resource set 6)

Dealing with a suspected case of COVID-19: Each parish must put in place clear procedures to be followed in parish facilities in the event of someone developing the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, either as an employee/volunteer or facility user. A checklist for dealing with a suspected case of COVID-19 is found in (Resource set 7)

Cleaning and disinfection in the parish facilities: A system of regular and effective cleaning and disinfection needs to be put in place as appropriate in each location. Parishes need to identify their particular needs in this area and to make the necessary arrangements. This will include specific instructions to staff and volunteers in regards to workstations and the cleaning of any equipment or items used by volunteers or staff. All arrangements need to be communicated to the appropriate people and recorded. (Resource set 8) outlines the areas for consideration.



RESOURCE SET 1

PARISH COVID-19 POLICY STATEMENT

A PARISH COVID-19 POLICY STATEMENT TEMPLATE

RESOURCE 1.A

(The finalised statement, produced by the parish, should be signed by the parish priest and displayed on suitable notice boards in parish facilities.

Ahead of signing this statement, parishes should note the various areas it covers and make the necessary plans in their regard, drawing on the guidance offered in this document and elsewhere.)

The Parish of _____ is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace and environment for all our staff, volunteers, parishioners and visitors. To ensure that, we have developed a parish COVID-19 Response plan. All members of the parish community have a shared responsibility 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, volunteers and visitors, as appropriate, 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, as well as respiratory etiquette and physical distancing
- establish a system by means of which staff, volunteers, visitors and users of parish facilities can report concerns relating to COVID-19
- inform all volunteers, staff, parishioners and visitors of essential hygiene and respiratory and physical distancing requirements
- adapt the church and parish buildings to facilitate physical distancing as required
- keep a log of staff, volunteers and facility user representatives to help with contact tracing
- have all volunteers and staff complete 'Return to Work Safely' forms and attend an induction/familiarisation briefing
- provide instructions for volunteers and staff to follow if they or a facility user develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 while on site
- intensify cleaning of parish facilities in line with government advice

This plan is a living document. It will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and amended to take into account new guidance from the Government and its agencies.

Feedback on any concerns can be made to the parish priest (or _____ the parish COVID-19 representative).

Signed:

Parish Priest

Date:

RESOURCE SET 2

RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S) FOR COVID-19

WHAT ARE RESPONSIBLE PERSONS FOR COVID-19 AND WHAT DO THEY DO RESOURCE 2.A

Under the government Return to Work Safely protocols it is envisaged that each parish has a person or **persons designated to take overall responsibility** to ensure that the facilities of the parish are set up correctly to contain the spread of the virus. They will help to ensure that staff, volunteers and visitors are made aware of and adhere to the necessary COVID-19 protocols when at work, visiting or using parish facilities.

As the containment of the virus demands a collaborative effort, the government under **Return to Work Safely**, requires each parish, as a workplace, to appoint at least one **Lead Worker Representative (LWR)** to work collaboratively with the employer (the parish priest) to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the parish workplace / facilities. This person or persons should come from the general body of staff or volunteers and be available and approachable in regard to their area of responsibility. Their primary task is to help in putting in place and, in particular, monitoring the COVID-19 control measures. They should be clear in their task and should have access to the parish priest /team to discuss any concerns or changes of practice needed as time goes on. (See Resource 2.B for more details on the role) A parish might consider having a deputy person to assist, support and step in for the LWR as needed.

While one person may be designated with a particular responsibility, it should always be borne in mind that the success of the COVID-19 plan is dependent on clear direction and information, on-going communication and a shared responsibility and commitment by all staff and volunteers.

The table below outlines a sample of the areas of responsibility in implementing the COVID-19 plan to which a person or persons could be assigned.

Responsible Persons Tasks Register (Non-Exhaustive)			
No.	Tasks (non-exhaustive list)	Responsible Person(s)	Signature
1.	Person responsible for overall implementation of the plan		
2.	Identification and training of lead worker representative		
3.	Planning and preparing return of staff and Volunteers and necessary paperwork		
4.	Control Measures		
5.	Staff and volunteer COVID-19 Induction		
6.	Dealing with a suspected Case of COVID-19		
7.	Cleaning and Disinfection		
8.	Lead Worker Representative		
9.	Other:		

THE ROLE OF LEAD WORKER REPRESENTATIVE

RESOURCE 2.B

THE FOLLOWING OUTLINES THE KEY AREAS IN THE ROLE OF THE LEAD WORKER REPRESENTATIVE:

- Help out with putting in place the COVID-19 control measures in the facilities of the parish, for example in the parish office, the parish centre or the church
- Communicate regularly with the parish priest and assist in providing COVID-19 health advice to fellow staff and volunteers
- Carry out regular checks that the COVID-19 control measures of the parish are in place
- Keep a record of non-compliance with the parish COVID-19 control measures
- Report any problem areas or non-compliance to the parish priest
- Listen to the concerns of fellow staff, volunteers and facility users and raise them with the parish priest
- Help fellow staff and volunteers to keep up to date with the latest COVID-19 advice from government
- Help as part of a response team in managing someone with symptoms of COVID-19 at the workplace

WHAT SUPPORT DOES THE PARISH NEED TO GIVE THE LEAD WORKER REPRESENTATIVE (LWR)

- Provide the information needed to carry out the role
- Provide/ assist in relevant training
- Provide the LWR with a COVID-19 induction
- Consult with the LWR when putting control measures in place to keep staff, volunteer, visitors and facility users safe.
- Make the LWR aware of the control measures that have been put in place
- Tell the LWR about any impact on or changes to first aid or emergency plans for parish facilities
- Agree a system of addressing concerns and regular communication with the LWR
- The parish needs to recognise and make allowance for the time needed to fulfil this role in the context of the LWR working hours

HOW CAN THE LWR PREPARE FOR THEIR ROLE

- Be familiar with the Return to Work Safely Protocol and the public health recommendations.
- Complete the COVID-19 return to work form and give it to the authorised person
- Complete the COVID-19 induction provided by the parish
- Keep up to date with the latest COVID-19 advice from government
- Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19
- Understand how to stop the virus spreading
- Know the cleaning requirements needed to prevent the spread of the virus

The Health and Safety Authority have developed a detailed **CHECK LIST FOR WORKER REPRESENTATIVES** to help them understand their role. This checklist is a useful tool for both the parish and the LWR to understand more practically the role. It can be accessed here as checklist no. 7:

https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid-19/return_to_work_safely_templates_checklists_and_posters/

RESOURCE SET 3

RETURNING TO WORK OR VOLUNTEERING

PLANNING AND PREPARING FOR THE RETURN OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

RESOURCE 3.A

Before staff or volunteers can return to their roles on parish premises, the parish needs to ensure that the environment and practices on site are organised in such a way that will help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Parishes should be aware of the Return to Work Safely Protocols that all employers are obliged to follow. These protocols are available for viewing and download at:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/22829a-return-to-work-safely-protocol/>

The Health and Safety Authority has developed a detailed **CHECK LIST FOR EMPLOYERS PLANNING AND PREPARING**. While not all items on the list are applicable to a parish setting, this checklist is a very useful tool for the parish in identifying and recording the actions that need to be taken in the local context. It can be accessed here as checklist no. 1:

https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid-19/return_to_work_safely_templates_checklists_and_posters/

This checklist covers areas to help ensure a system whereby the employer:

- Keeps up to date with government advice
- Makes the necessary communications with staff and volunteers prior to a return, and receives and files the necessary paperwork at least three days ahead of their return
- Has in place specific control measures for the local context to help contain the spread of the virus (these control measures will be looked at in the next resource set)
- Puts in place a mechanism for on-going communication with staff and volunteers and monitoring of control measures
- Has arranged for the necessary cleaning and PPE supplies as required ahead of a return to work or volunteering

F010-2 X Parish

Covid-19 Employee/Volunteer Return to Work Form

In line with the Government's, 'Return to Work Safely Protocol', x Parish requires that all employees/volunteers complete this form before their return to the workplace. This form should be returned as soon as possible however, no later than 3 days before your return to your work/role.

Details

Employee/Volunteer Name:

Employee/Volunteer Role:

Manager Name:

Covid-19 Questions for Employees/Volunteers

1. Do you have symptoms of cough, fever, high temperature, sore throat, runny nose, breathlessness, loss of taste or smell or, flu-like symptoms now or in the past 14 days?
Yes/No
2. Have you been diagnosed with confirmed or suspected Covid-19 infection in the last 14 days?
Yes/No
3. Are you a close contact of a person who is a confirmed or suspected case of Covid-19 in the past 14 days (i.e. less than 2m for more than 15 minutes accumulative in 1 day)?
Yes/No
4. Have you been advised by a doctor to self-isolate at this time?
Yes/No
5. Have you been advised by a doctor to cocoon at this time?
Yes/No

If in response to any of the questions above, you have selected 'yes', you are advised to contact your Manager and seek medical advice prior to your return to the workplace/role.

Additional Notes for your Employer/Manager (if any)

Confirmation and Acknowledgement

I hereby confirm that the above information is correct as of the date of signature, and I have answered all questions to the best of my knowledge and that failing to correctly answer the questions above, may place myself and my colleagues at risk. I will notify my manager as soon as possible if there is any change to my medical status as outlined above.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Data Privacy Statement

The information on this form is gathered in accordance with the Governments "Return to Work Safety Protocol" concerning Covid 19. The information gathered is being processed under Article 6 (c) to comply with a legal obligation and Article 6 (d) to protect the vital interests of the data subjects. Your personal information is also being processed under Article 9 (b) to meet obligations in the field of employment and also Article 9 (i) for reasons of public interest in the area of public health. This information will only be accessed by those who are authorised to do so and will be retained for as long as is required to protect against threats to public health and/or to comply with legal obligations.

RESOURCE SET 4

CONTROL MEASURES IN PARISH FACILITIES FOR STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND USERS

KEY AREAS IN DETERMINING SPECIFIC CONTROL MEASURES

RESOURCE 4.A

IN GENERAL

- One of the key messages to manage the risks of COVID-19 is to do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into the parish facilities in the first instance
- Staff, volunteers, and regular users of parish facilities who have symptoms of COVID-19, or who have been identified by the HSE as a close contact for a person with COVID-19, should not attend a parish facility and should follow the applicable HSE advice
- If someone develops symptoms while on parish property they are to bring this to the attention of the designated person in the parish who should then follow the local procedures that have been put in place
- Parishes should organise with suppliers for contactless delivery, invoicing and payment
- There should be a visible increase to cleaning processes in the facilities of the parish
- All people entering parish facilities need to perform hand hygiene with a hand sanitiser. Staff and volunteers should be made aware of the need to regularly wash or sanitise their hands
- Physical distancing of 2 metres should be maintained between staff, volunteers, users of the facility and visitors as much as possible. Where this distance cannot be achieved screens and /or face coverings should be used. In general, people can be encouraged to use facemasks when visiting parish facilities, in accordance with up to date government and health advice

THE AREAS THAT COME UNDER CONTROL MEASURES FOR A PARISH INCLUDE:

- Knowing and sharing information of the Symptoms of COVID-19
- Hand hygiene/ Hand sanitising
- Respiratory hygiene
- Physical distancing
- Minimising contact
- Considering at risk workers
- Contact tracing
- Determining the opening of facilities for parish activities and for use by outside bodies

The Health and Safety Authority has developed a more detailed **CHECK LIST FOR CONTROL MEASURES**. While not all items on the list are applicable to a parish setting, this checklist is a very useful tool for the parish in identifying and recording the actions that need to be taken in the local context. It can be accessed here as checklist no. 2:

https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid19/return_to_work_safely_templates_checklists_and_posters/

Each of these measures are explored separately in the following resources.

KNOWING AND SHARING INFORMATION ON THE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

Resource 4.B

- In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms: high temperature; cough; shortness of breath or breathing difficulties; loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste.
- As well as verbally informing staff and volunteers during their induction, the parish should ensure that this information is shared through the use of posters in parish offices, centres and other facilities.
- Posters, such as this one that outlines personal protection measures and the symptoms of COVID-19, can be printed off from the following website:



<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/>

(See resource 6:A for more on signage)

HAND HYGIENE / HAND SANITISING

RESOURCE 4:C

- Staff and volunteers should understand why hand hygiene is important as well as when and how to wash their hands. This should form part of their induction
- Parishes should promote good hygiene and display posters on how to wash hands
- Good hand hygiene can be achieved by proper hand washing or use of a hand sanitiser
- Staff and volunteers are to be informed in their induction that hands should be washed:
 - On arrival at / departing the parish facility
 - Before and after eating or drinking
 - After using the toilet
 - After coughing or sneezing
 - When hands are dirty
 - Before and after being on public transport
 - After touching potentially contaminated surfaces (including laptops, printers, staplers, etc)
 - After changing tasks
 - If in contact with someone displaying any signs of COVID-19
- Use of hand hygiene facilities, including wash basins, needs to be managed so as to avoid a congestion of people waiting to use wash hand basins or hand sanitisers

Again by reviewing your specific facilities (church, office, parish centre, hall...) the following should be considered:

- How many hand washing and hand sanitising stations do you need to put in place to accommodate staff, volunteers and visitors adhering to hand hygiene measures?

- Where will they be most conveniently located for particular groups, for example at all entry/exit points, work /volunteer stations (including at office desks and by printers/ outdoor workspaces), high traffic areas, meeting rooms, kitchen/ canteen areas...?

- How will you manage possible congestion around hand hygiene facilities, (including bathroom facilities and hand sanitiser stations)?

- What arrangements have been made to ensure hand hygiene facilities are regularly checked and well-stocked, e.g. hot water, soap dispensers, paper towels, touch free bins, alcohol-based hand sanitiser? How will you manage the continued supply of sanitary stock?

- How have you incorporated hand hygiene into the staff and volunteer induction, including informing them when they need to wash their hands?

RESPIRATORY HYGIENE

RESOURCE 4:D

- Parish staff and volunteers should follow good respiratory hygiene. Parishes can facilitate this by including information in their induction training and also by means of communicating good practice through posters, as well as providing practical aids to good respiratory hygiene.

In this regard, parishes can ask themselves:

- Have we told staff and volunteers in their induction of good respiratory measures to limit the spread of the virus?
 - Avoid touching the face, eyes, nose and mouth
 - Cover the mouth and nose with an elbow or tissue when coughing or sneezing
 - Dispose of tissues in a covered bin and wash hands immediately

- Have we made tissues available in our facilities and covered bins or bin bags for their disposal?

- Is there a system in place to regularly empty bins so they don't over fill?

- An essential measure in containing the spread of COVID-19 is the maintaining of physical distancing – keeping two metres apart as much as possible. In a parish setting this physical distancing has already been considered in regard to the church building, following particular protocols for the celebration of Mass.
- Parishes must also look to implementing physical distancing measures in other parish facilities, for example the parish office, parish centre, kitchen /canteen facilities, hall and/or meeting rooms, shop.
- Parishes will need to put in place measures that help maintain physical distancing for parish staff and volunteers but also for users of parish facilities and visitors.
- Maintaining physical distancing will necessitate both arranging and marking out work and public spaces, determining room capacities, as well as verbally and visually (through posters) reminding people on site to maintain a physical distance.
- It will also involve looking to the activities in parish facilities and the rosters of volunteers and staff, as well as working from home options where feasible.

The following checklist is offered to help parishes put in place practical measures to facilitate physical distancing in the different settings in the parish.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING IN WORK AND PUBLIC AREAS:

- Begin by identifying the different workspaces and the different public spaces (some may overlap, for example the parish centre reception desk or the parish shop) in parish facilities:

- For each space consider the following:
 - Is physical distancing of 2 metres possible in this work / public space?
 - If not, can changes be made to ensure physical distancing?
 - If not, do protections need to be put in place, for example a screen/ use of face covering?
 - Is any marking or signage required to help maintain a 2 metre distance?

(Notes)

- Depending on the number of parish staff and volunteers, what action can you take to rearrange work times and shifts to minimise the number of people at work or in the facility together?

- What action can you take in regard to breaks and lunch to comply with physical distancing? This might include staggering breaks or rearranging break areas or kitchens (for example, placing tables and chairs further apart or having lunch at your desk).

- Can the parish provide a one way system for entering and exiting any or all of the parish facilities?

- In the case of outside worker activities, what has the parish put in place to implement physical distancing?

- Where physical distancing cannot be achieved or maintained (for example in shared or public workspaces) **FACE MASKS** may be required. Parishes, staff and volunteers, should always keep up to date with and follow Public Health advice issued in regard to face masks by Gov.ie/NPHET
Note: The wearing of masks as a prevention measure against COVID-19 is not a substitute for hand hygiene and physical distancing and must always be used in conjunction with, and not substituting for, other prevention measures. If masks are worn they should be clean and they should not be shared or handled by other colleagues.

Any parish note in regard to use of facemasks:

- For parishes with parish centres or meeting rooms the capacity of each room, allowing for 2 metre physical distancing, needs to be calculated. This will considerably reduce the numbers that can be catered for and will exclude some rooms from being used at all.

List of Rooms and capacity with 2 metre physical distancing:

MINIMISING CONTACT

RESOURCE 4:F

Reducing the amount of interaction among staff and parish volunteers, as well as by facility users is an essential component of reducing the risk of COVID-19. To this end the following need to be considered:

- Has the parish minimised the numbers of meetings of staff and of volunteers and made use of alternative technologies when possible, for example online or phone meetings?
- If staff have to meet among themselves or with parish volunteers, does the parish make sure that they meet in a large space where physical distancing can be done and for as short a time as possible?
- If staff have to travel for work in the parish, have you advised them to travel alone?

- As part of their induction training, have staff and volunteers been informed not to shake hands and to avoid physical contact?
- In regard to the use of parish facilities, has the parish decided on a slow, phased opening to parish groups and outside groups that will include staggering starting times between for example meeting rooms, to avoid congestion and allow time for cleaning? This is dealt with further in 4:I below.

CONSIDERING AT RISK STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

RESOURCE 4:G

At risk groups fall into two categories, very high risk and high risk. People who fall under these categories are outlined at the following webpage: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/people-at-higher-risk.html>

- ✓ Parishes should first determine who among their staff or among their regular volunteers are at a higher risk from COVID-19.
- ✓ Identified people, if staff, should be enabled to work from home if possible. Volunteers should be fully supported in any choice to opt out of volunteering for the time being.
- ✓ If working from home is not possible, these staff should take extra care to ensure to maintain a physical distance of 2 metres and practice regular handwashing.

Any necessary notes:

CONTACT TRACING

RESOURCE 4:H

- The ***Return to Work Safely Protocol*** states that employers are to have a register to allow for the tracing of contacts of an employee presenting with COVID-19 symptoms. In the parish setting this includes volunteers and groups or individuals who use parish facilities. At this time we have not been requested to do such a register for those who attend Mass or other services in the church but this is subject to change.
- It is recommended that each parish has in place a daily contact log which allows for this process with clergy, staff, volunteers, contractors and groups using parish facilities. People who attend a parish office or centre for just a matter of minutes, for example to book an anniversary, or who come into the parish shop, do not need to be logged.
- In the context of groups using parish facilities, it suffices to have the name and number of the COVID-19 contact person for the group but this is solely with the understanding that the group will keep its own list of people in attendance for the purposes of contact tracing.
- It should be clear in the parish who is responsible for maintaining this log which may need to cover a number of facilities across the parish. This person may be the Lead Worker Representative or another. The extra work this entails needs to be acknowledged in their workload.

- As personal data is being collected, the COVID-19 contact log should be stored securely and should have the following Data Privacy Statement which has been provided by the Diocesan Data Protection Officer for GDPR compliance.

P026-1 Data Privacy Statement for Covid 19 Log for Employee/Volunteer Contacts/Groups to facilitate contact tracing.

Data Privacy Statement

The information on this form is gathered in accordance with the Governments “Return to Work Safety Protocol” concerning Covid 19. The information is gathered to maintain a log of contacts in the event of the requirement to perform contact tracing. The information gathered is being processed under Article 6 (c) to comply with a legal obligation, Article 6(d) protecting the vital interests of data subjects & Article 6 (e) processing is necessary for the performance of a task in the public interest. This information will only be accessed by those who are authorised to do so and will be retained for as long as is required to protect against threats to public health and/or to comply with legal obligations.

DETERMINING OPENING OF FACILITIES FOR PARISH ACTIVITIES AND FOR USE BY OUTSIDE BODIES

RESOURCE 4:1

- One of the most important decisions that will need to be made in each parish is in regard to the opening up of facilities for use by parish groups and by outside bodies.
- Parish centres, halls, and other multi-use parish facilities support a wide range of local activity. However, their communal nature also makes them places that are vulnerable to the spread of coronavirus.
- All the control measures that have been put in place for staff and volunteers and visitors to parish facilities will also need to be in place for outside bodies if they are to have use of facilities, either paid or unpaid.
- Each parish needs to consider its readiness, or otherwise, for opening up facilities, in the first instance for parish activities as well as for essential community support groups like AA / meals on wheels, and other diverse activities that might have happened in parish facilities in the past, for example Irish Dancing / scouts / chess etc.
- **In deciding the extent of opening up to wider parish activities and outside bodies the following needs to be considered:**
 - ✓ It is the parish responsibility to ensure any facility, access to it, and any equipment or substances provided are safe for people using it, so far as is reasonably practicable.
 - ✓ It is also the parish responsibility to ensure that they have informed any user of parish property of the need to strictly adhere to the up to date government guidelines on the number that can gather and the length of time they can gather.
 - ✓ The parish will have to monitor the overall number in a parish facility at any one time to avoid any possible congestion that may happen, even if the combined number present is lower than the permissible amount.
 - ✓ Before a room can be used it will need to be properly cleaned and sanitised by the parish as the provider of the facility. Likewise after it has been used. This will require time, personnel and the cost of cleaning equipment.

- ✓ Any group who uses a parish facility either free of charge or for a fee, must confirm to the parish that they have adapted their activity to adhere to COVID-19 government advice and that they are COVID-19 compliant.
- ✓ A COVID-19 contact log will have to be registered for each group using parish facilities.

In light of the above, each parish needs to look at their facilities and decide the following:

Which parish facilities are we ready to open and operate in a safe manner?

Which groups are we ready to open to? (For example a parish might decide in the first phase of opening only to host essential parish activities and/or essential meetings such as AA)

Who is designated in the parish to proceed with bookings for parish facilities, completing and filing the necessary paperwork and informing the group of the need to follow and be compliant with Government COVID-19 advice. Is this person clear about their task and has the necessary information and forms?

FORM FOR COMPLETION: USE OF PARISH PROPERTY DURING COVID-19

RESOURCE 4:J

When taking bookings for the use of parish property parishes are already aware of the form '**PARISHES 1.5A T1 FORM FOR USE OF CHURCH PROPERTY BY EXTERNAL GROUPS**' which can be downloaded at:

<https://www.kandle.ie/resources/safeguarding/4-forms/>

This form demonstrates the necessity and requirement of receiving **safeguarding** and **insurance** details when booking Church Property.

In the light COVID-19 there is the further need for users to complete the following form which should be filed along with the booking form. This form on the following page is based on one from Ossory Diocese.



Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin Use of Parish Property during Covid-19

_____ Parish welcomes organisations/groups/individuals using parish facilities and wish to be assured that all reasonable steps have been taken to comply with all guidelines and norms issued by the Government of Ireland and/or the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE). The responsibility for complying with these guidelines rests with the group using parish property. National Guidelines and best practice recommendations in relation to safe operation during the current pandemic, must be followed by any group using parish property. As an external group the following information is required in respect of your booking, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all who are attending as part of your booking.

Conditions of use by external groups.

It is the responsibility of any group using Parish property to abide by all guidelines recommended by the Government or NPHE at that time. This will vary depending on the Phase we are in or as circumstances change.

Booking Details - Please complete the following in relation to your booking.

Name of Group:

.....

Purpose:

.....

Have you measures in place to comply with all current Covid Government Guidelines for this particular activity. Yes No

Facilities required:

.....

Date of Commencement: Date of Completion:

Daily Hours of use: Commence: Finish:.....

Please supply a name/number/email of the person responsible for contact tracing in your group:

.....

.....

Should a member of the above group contract Covid, or be a close contact to someone with Covid, I confirm that I will inform the Parish through the Parish Priest or Parish office.

Yes

PTO

To be signed by official/co-ordinator of the organisation/group.

Signed: _____

Print Name: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

Data Privacy Statement

The information on this form is gathered in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Government of Ireland and the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE) concerning Covid 19. The information is processed under Article 6 (b) for the performance of a contract and Article 6 (d) to protect the vital interests of the data subject. Your personal information is also being processed under Article 9 (i) for reasons of public interest in the area of public health. This information will only be accessed by those who are authorised to do so and will be retained for as long as is required to protect against threats to public health and/or to comply with legal obligations.

RESOURCE SET 5

INDUCTION OF STAFF AND REGULAR VOLUNTEERS

WHAT DOES INDUCTION TRAINING INVOLVE

RESOURCE 5.1

Every parish has its own particular set of circumstances in regards to staff and regular volunteers (for example volunteers who weekly count money, voluntary sacristans, etc) as well as the range of parish facilities. Because of this, while there will be common elements, each parish will need to tailor the induction training for staff and those volunteers who will need to be trained.

Induction training aims to provide staff and volunteers with key information on COVID-19 and inform them of changes that have been made across parish facilities, as well as updating them on new ways of operating in the different facilities of the parish.

It is essential that staff and volunteers are clear on all of the information and that there is good communication established. It is essential, also, that they accept their responsibility and ownership for ensuring they make themselves aware of and adhere to the changes that have been put in place.

This training is a requirement under government **Returning to Work Safely Protocols** and is to be delivered before the resumption of duties.

Areas covered in the induction include:

- Introduction to the overall responsible person for COVID-19 and the Lead Worker Representative (may be the same person)
- Awareness of the Parish COVID-19 Policy Statement
- Agreement among staff and volunteers to abide by any new procedures and encourage compliance.
- Signs and symptoms of COVID-19 (at home and in the workplace)
- Information on how the virus is spread
- Control measures that have been put in place in the different facilities of the parish to help prevent infection (This will be very specific to your location and will be informed by your overall plan)
- COVID-19 contact log requirement – daily log of staff/volunteers and other contacts while in the workplace or centre/ parish facilities and who is responsible for maintaining this log
- Any changes to work practices, including staggering of hours, specific cleaning and hygiene measures for workstations / shared equipment/ etc
- How the parish will facilitate on-going communication for staff and volunteers, including reporting procedures to help monitor and sustain best practice and keeping staff and volunteers up to date with any changes that may need to be made
- Procedures that have been put in place for dealing with a suspected case of COVID-19

The Health and Safety Authority has developed a more detailed **CHECK LIST FOR INDUCTION**. While not all items on the list are applicable to a parish setting, this checklist is a very useful tool for the parish in identifying and recording the actions that need to be taken in the local context. It can be accessed here as checklist no. 3:

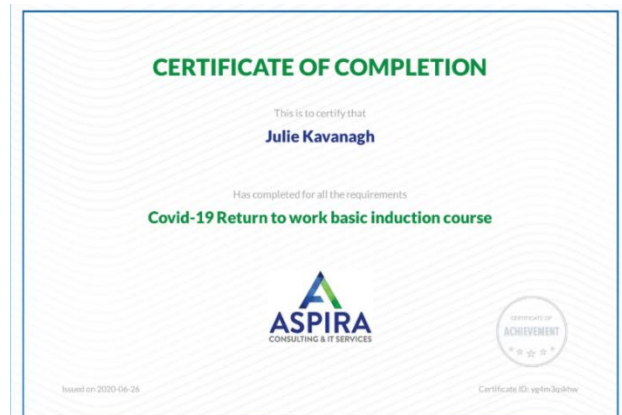
https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid19/return_to_work_safely_templates_checklists_and_posters/

FREE ON-LINE TRAINING FOR RETURN TO WORK

This course provides the basic induction information needed as part of the return to work protocol. Topics covered include how the virus is spread and its symptoms, good hygiene practices and what to do if you suspect you have COVID-19 while at work. There is a certificate of completion following a short quiz. Altogether it takes roughly 15 minutes to individually complete the course and take the short on-line quiz. On successful completion of the quiz a certificate is generated such as the one shown.

The link to this free course is: <https://learn.aspira.ie/>

This course needs to be supplemented with information on the local control measures and procedures that have been put in place in the parish and other information as outlined in resource 5.A



POWERPOINT PRESENTATION FROM NEWBRIDGE PARISH

Newbridge parish has kindly shared a PowerPoint presentation that it has prepared for use with its local staff and volunteers. Parishes are welcome to adapt this PowerPoint to accommodate specific information for your parish. The PowerPoint can be accessed on: <https://www.kandle.ie/covid-19/>

VIDEO RESOURCES

A series of videos on hand hygiene and preventing the spread of Coronavirus can be accessed on <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/>

Videos from Tuam Province on the safe and effective use of PPE, Cleaning, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and physical distancing can be accessed on the kandle website at:

<https://www.kandle.ie/covid-19/>

CHECKLIST FOR WORKERS

The HSA has a checklist for workers. It can be a useful tool for staff and volunteers to help them realise what they need to do to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in parish facilities. It can be downloaded as checklist no 6 at:

[https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid19/return to work safely templates checklists and posters/](https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/covid19/return%20to%20work%20safely%20templates%20checklists%20and%20posters/)

PARISH CHECKLIST

- Who do you have in place to design and deliver this training in the parish? (can be a shared task)
- What support will they need to assist in the design and delivery?
- Who needs to undertake this training in your parish?
- When will it take place?
- What measures have you put in place to ensure that the training will be carried out safely?
- How will your record completion of training?

IDENTIFYING KEY COMMUNICATION ACTIONS

RESOURCE 6:A

Putting in place a good communication system in regard to COVID-19 is essential and requires considered thought. Communication comes in the form of the visual (posters/ signs/emails etc) as well as the verbal (in person / phone call / zoom calls/ one to one and team meetings etc).

Checklist for Communicating with Staff and Volunteers

- What system have we put in place as a parish to keep our staff and volunteers up to date with our COVID-19 plan?
- What system have we provided for feedback and input from staff and volunteers?
- To whom do people, including members of the public and users of our facilities, bring concerns in regards to compliance in parish facilities and how is this person contacted?
- What other areas of communication between staff, volunteers and facility users do we need to take account of?

Posters and Signage:

COVID-19 related posters are available for free download from a number of websites including: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/> as well as at www.kandle.ie/covid-19/

- A parish might do a walk-through of their facilities to assist in answering the following:

In each of the parish facilities, where do we need to display an information poster or sign on the following:
symptoms of COVID-19; Preventing the spread of COVID-19; hand hygiene; social distancing; wearing of facemasks; entry points; exit points (take each in turn)

In light of this, how many of each of these posters will we need to have?

Who will put them up?

When will they be put up?

Who will make sure that signs displayed in parish facilities are up to date and are presentable?

RESOURCE SET 7

DEALING WITH A SUSPECTED CASE OF COVID-19

CHECKLIST FOR DEALING WITH A SUSPECTED CASE OF COVID-19

RESOURCE 7.A

Every parish will be required to know what to do in the case of a suspected case of COVID-19 and to put in place procedures that are communicated to staff. A member of staff, for example the lead worker representative, should be nominated who will be responsible for ensuring that all aspects of the procedures to deal with suspected cases have been adhered to and are known to staff and volunteers.

Isolation Area:

- Have you identified a place that can be used as an isolation area, preferably with a door that can be closed?
- The isolation area does not have to be a separate room but if it is not a room it should be at least 2m away from others in the room.
- Is the isolation area accessible, including to staff, volunteers and facility users with disabilities?
- Is the route to the isolation area accessible?
- Have you a contingency plan for dealing with more than one suspected case of COVID-19?
- Are the following available in the isolation area(s)?
 - Tissues
 - Hand sanitiser
 - Disinfectant / wipes
 - Gloves /masks
 - Waste bags
 - Pedal operated, closed bin
 - Ventilation, e.g. ability to open a window

Isolating a person:

- Are procedures in place for a designated person(s) to accompany the affected person to the isolation room, along the isolation route, while maintaining physical distancing (2 metres) from them?
- Are staff familiar with this procedure?
- Have others been advised to maintain a distance of at least 2 meters from the affected person at all times?
- Is there a disposable mask available for the affected person to wear in a common area and when exiting the building?

Arranging for the affected person to leave the parish facility:

- Have you established, by asking them, that the affected person feels well enough to travel home?
- If yes, have you directed them to do so and for them to call their GP and self-isolate at home?
- If a minor, have you immediately contacted their parents / guardians and arranged for them to collect the minor affected?
- If the affected person feels unable to go home, has the designated person let them remain in isolation and enabled them to call their GP?

- Has the affected person been advised to avoid touching other people, surfaces and objects?
- Has the affected person been advised to cover their mouth and nose with the disposable tissues provided when they cough or sneeze, and to put the tissue in the waste bag provided, before washing their hands?
- Has transport home or to an assessment centre been arranged if the affected person has been directed to go there by their GP?
- Has the affected person been advised not to go their GP's surgery or any pharmacy or hospital?
- Has the affected person been advised that they must not use public transport?
- Has the affected person been advised to continue wearing the face mask until they reach home?

Follow Up:

- Has the designated person in the parish carried out an assessment of the incident to identify any follow-up actions needed?
- Has the incident and assessment been logged and filed by the parish?
- Is there a designated person available to provide advice and assistance if contacted by the HSE?

Cleaning and Disinfecting:

- Have you taken the isolation area out-of-use, and any areas in the parish facility where the person was involved, until cleaned and disinfected?
- Have you arranged for the cleaning and disinfecting of these areas at least one hour after the person has left the building? (This time delay will reduce the virus load by 75%)
- Have those responsible for cleaning been trained in dealing with contaminated areas and supplied with the appropriate PPE?

RESOURCE SET 8

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING IN PARISH FACILITIES

Detailed information on cleaning and disinfection can be found at the following link.

https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/Environmental-persistence-of-SARS-CoV-2-virus-Options-for-cleaning2020-03-26_0.pdf

Further information can be found at www.Gov.ie , www.hse.ie , www.hpsc.ie and www.hsa.ie

CHECKLIST FOR CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

RESOURCE 8.A

- Have you a system in place for checking and keeping up to date with the latest public health advice from Government and to adjust your cleaning procedures in line with that advice?
- Have you put in place an enhanced cleaning regime and are staff clear as to why this is required?
- Have you identified the facilities of the parish that require cleaning and the frequency of cleaning needed?
- Have you sufficient cleaning materials in place to support the enhanced cleaning regime?
- Are you aware that cleaning with warm water and household detergents (warm soapy water) and use of common disinfectant products should suffice for general precautionary cleaning? Diluted household bleach is suggested for contaminated surfaces. For surfaces that can be damaged by bleach, 70% concentration of ethanol is needed for decontamination after cleaning with a neutral detergent.
- Have frequently touched surfaces been included in your cleaning plan, for example:
 - Table tops and desks
 - Door handles and light switches
 - Toiled and toilet doors, taps
 - Computer equipment and controls
 - Office equipment (photocopiers/ printers etc)
 - Kitchen surfaces and cupboard handles
 - Others
- Are frequently touched surfaces visibly clean at all time and cleaned at least twice a day?
- Are washrooms and surfaces in communal areas being cleaned at least twice a day and whenever visibly dirty?
- Have you decluttered spaces and removed unnecessary items to limit hard surfaces?
- Have you made arrangements for the regular and safe emptying of bins? And have no touch bins been provided where practical?
- Have staff been told to keep their own workspace clean? Has a clean desk policy been introduced?
- Have you provided staff with cleaning materials such as disinfectant or wipes to keep their own workspace clean?

- Have cleaning materials been provided in shared spaces?
- Have staff and volunteers been informed that they are responsible for cleaning personal items they have brought to work / parish facilities, e.g. mobile phones, and are to avoid leaving them down in communal areas or to clean the area if they do so?
- Have staff and volunteer been told not to share pencils, cups, cutlery and pens? That shared office and/or kitchen equipment, e.g. photocopier / kettle, should be wiped clean before and after each use? And that staff and volunteers are encouraged to bring and clean their own cups for use?
- Have staff been instructed to read and follow instructions on the product label / Safety Data Sheet for any cleaning product(s) before use and that where relevant appropriate PPE is worn by cleaners? For everyday cleaning plastic aprons and gloves can be used. A higher specification of PPE is required where contamination is considered likely, e.g. filtering face covering, goggles/ face shield, disposable long-sleeved water resistant gown, disposable gloves.
- Have cleaning staff been informed and trained in new cleaning arrangements?
- If cleaning staff have been instructed to wear gloves when cleaning, are they aware of the need to wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water, both before and after wearing gloves?
- Is there a system in place for the disposal of cleaning cloths and used wipes in a rubbish bag? (Current HSE guidance recommends waste such as cleaning waste, tissues etc. from a person suspected of having COVID-19 should be double bagged and stored in a secure area for 72 hours before being presented for general waste collection)
- Is there a system in place to make sure reusable cleaning equipment including mop heads and non-disposable cloths are cleaned before re-use?
- Have you ensured there is a system in place to ensure that equipment such as buckets are emptied and cleaned with a fresh solution of disinfectant before re-use?

The Parish COVID-19 Response Plan is a living plan that requires on-going monitoring and will need to adapt to changing local and national circumstances.

Parishes should continue to keep up to date with government and health advice and be ready to adapt their plan accordingly.

Useful Websites:

www.gov.ie

www.hse.ie

www.hsa.ie

www.hpsc.ie

<https://www.pobal.ie/reopeningyourservice/>

<https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Publications/Return-to-Work-Safely-Protocol>

**This Guidance document is available for download at
KANDLE.IE/COVID-19/**