



COMHALTAS

COVID-19 Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann Education Module

This education module aims to inform those involved with Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann on their roles and responsibilities for the safe resumption of Comhaltas facilities and activities. It is relevant to all units and members of Comhaltas, in particular, Management of Centres, Tutors, Volunteers, students and the Parents/Guardians of students. Comhaltas units should ensure that a copy of this document is available in digital or hard copy form to Comhaltas members and anyone attending a Comhaltas facility or Comhaltas activity.



COMHALTAS

- Through the measures we have taken to date, we have lowered the infection rate of Covid-19 across communities. We have now moved to the next phase of re-opening our communities across Ireland and many countries where we have an overseas presence.
- As we emerge and begin getting back to our Comhaltas activities, we need to ensure that we do not start to spread infection.
- By explaining **roles and responsibilities**, the information in this educational module will help ensure that everyone involved in our organization returns to activity in a safer way.

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Understand key medical information on Covid-19.
- Recognise what units must do to prepare for a safe return, including preparing facilities.
- Interpret key control measures for members including students, volunteers, tutors and Parents/Guardians.
- Know where to go for more information and resources.

Covid-19 - Symptoms and How It Spreads

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.

Common symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- A fever (high temperature – 37.5 degrees Celsius or above)
- A cough – this can be any kind of cough, not just dry.
- Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties.
- Loss of taste or smell.
- Some people infected with the virus, so called asymptomatic cases, have experienced no symptoms at all.

5 rules for staying safe:

- Wash your hands frequently
- Maintain Social distancing
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth
- Practice Respiratory hygiene
- Seek medical care early

How COVID-19 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 in droplets from an infected person and land directly on mucus membranes in the eye, nose or mouth of a person standing close to them.
- 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.

The Role of Covid Supervisors

This lesson explains the role of Covid Supervisors in Comhaltas units.

- It is recommended that every Comhaltas Unit should have a Covid Supervisor(s) who has an understanding of this educational module.
- The Comhaltas Unit will communicate the details of the appointed Covid Supervisor(s) to all members of the Comhaltas Unit and ensure that the appointed person receive all necessary support to undertake the role.

The role will include:

- **1. Health Questionnaires**

Administering Health Questionnaires for Comhaltas members wishing to resume Comhaltas activities.

- **2. Safety Information and Protocols**

Communicating and distributing necessary safety information and protocols to all Comhaltas members in the unit.

- **3. Record Keeping**

Monitoring records of attendees at Comhaltas activities. This information will be especially important in the event that **contact tracing** or other intervention is required.

- **4. Cleaning and Sanitising**

Ensuring the regular cleaning and sanitising of all relevant welfare facilities and equipment.
After each activity, e.g. sanitising door handles, seats etc.

- **5. Reporting**

Making necessary representations to Comhaltas Unit with regard to any Covid-19 concerns.
Reporting any areas of non-compliance immediately to Comhaltas Unit and ensuring that these are addressed.

- **6. Latest Information**

Keeping up to date on all relevant guidelines from HSE, HSA and Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann.

Protocol if someone becomes unwell

- If an Adult becomes unwell at a Comhaltas activity, he/she should go home immediately and contact his/her GP.
- If an Underage Person becomes unwell at a Comhaltas activity, he/she should be escorted to the isolation room (part of facility identified as isolation space) immediately by the Covid Supervisor and one other adult. The individual's Parent/Guardian should be contacted immediately.
- The protocol for assessment and decision to send for testing is the GP's responsibility.
- If this protocol requires those present to be in close proximity indoors, everyone present should wear a face mask.
- The relevant Covid Supervisor - and one other adult for Underage members - is expected to stay for the duration of each activity in case an individual requires isolation.
- The number of Covid Supervisors needed by each Comhaltas unit will be **proportional to the size of the Comhaltas unit**, i.e. the number of activities and members within the unit.

COVID-19 Health Questionnaire

Sample Questionnaire on page 22

- Symptoms such as a high temperature, fever, cough, shortness of breath, and change in taste or smell will be identified.
- The presence of symptoms, or temperature (**over 37.5°C**) **precludes attendance at Comhaltas activities and facilities.**
- It is the **responsibility of the individual** to monitor their **own temperature.**
- Comhaltas units are not responsible for recording of temperatures.
- If required, individuals should telephone their GPs for advice and management.
- Temperature must not be recorded on the Health Questionnaire.
- The Questionnaire will need to be **completed once**, before the initial return to Comhaltas activities.
- Each individual will be required to **sign a declaration** at each subsequent activity to confirm their health status has not changed.
- These measures will be reviewed in conjunction with public health advice.
- **Positive symptomatology or a high temperature (over 37.5°C) precludes attendance.**
- **In such circumstances, the GP should be telephoned.**
- **Do not attend Doctors surgery or Comhaltas facilities or activities.**

How the Questionnaire Works

- The Health Questionnaire (sample on page 22) can be completed in hard copy, in which case it should be presented to the relevant Covid Supervisor on entry to the Comhaltas facility/activity.
- Each individual will be required to sign a declaration at each subsequent activity to confirm their health status has not changed.

This lesson contains information for vulnerable groups, the risks of spread by children and advice for Parents/Guardians.

Current public health guidelines have identified groups who are vulnerable.

People at higher risk from Covid-19

- Covid-19 can make anyone seriously ill. But for some people, the risk is higher.
- There are two levels of higher risk:
- very high risk (also called extremely vulnerable)
- high risk
- The HSE offers different advice to protect people in each group.

What each group should do

- **Very high risk people - You should followed the advice on cocooning.**
- **High risk people - Strictly follow the advice on how to protect yourself and others from Covid-19.**
- Members who have a concern that they might have a higher personal risk, should **discuss the situation with their GP** (or an appropriate medical professional) **before making a decision** on whether to return to activity or not.

Risk - Adult vs. Junior members

- The HIQA document “Evidence summary for spread of COVID-19 by children” published in May 2020 indicated that there is low transmissibility among children less than 14 years old.
- Serious illness in children is rare to date. There are low rates of child-to-adult or child-to-family member transmission in the limited number of studies available.
- As with all situations there is a risk of infection but it appears to be lower in children.
- Outdoor activity appears to further lower the risk.

Preparing Facilities for Activities

This lesson contains advice for the preparation of facilities.

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- Signage and useful resources can be downloaded from the HSE website at:
<http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/newsfeatures/covid19-updates/partner-resources/>
- Appropriate signage in line with public health guidelines should be placed at the entrance of facilities, in car parks, and at the entrances of toilets. These signs should be clearly visible and easy to understand.
- Signs should emphasize the government recommended social distancing rules (2m at present), hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, avoidance of personal contact, shaking hands etc.
- Covid-19 posters and resources on preventing the spread are available for download and print at:
- It is recommended that hand dispensers be provided at the entrance of facilities and in classrooms.
- Appropriate disposal bins for hazardous biological waste should be available and clearly marked.

Note - Hand washing facilities and anti-bacterial soap will suffice.

- Toilets must be regarded as potentially contaminated areas. Ventilation is important, doors and windows should remain open in so far as is reasonable and appropriate.
- Basic hygiene etiquette adapted to the circumstances should be promoted, e.g. use of elbows to open doors, and using paper towels to turn taps on/off.
- On exit of toilet, use the hand washing facilities and anti-bacterial soap provided.
- There should be a regular cleaning programme with daily deep disinfection in place.

Cleaning Checklist

- The HSE checklist for cleaning childcare facilities contains a log which is found in most bathrooms.
- This can be amended by Units for different locations other than bathrooms to ensure that key touch-points have been cleaned.
- The frequency of cleaning required will be different for each Unit and depend on the level of use.
- <http://www.hspsc.ie/a-z/lifestages/childcare/samplecleaningscheduleandchecklist/> to access the sample checklist.

Scheduling of activities

- Timesheets should be used to clearly show what classes are using facilities at what times.
- The principle of “**come in, attend activity and leave**” will apply.
- There should be a time interval between students departing having completed activity and the next class arriving.
- Attendance will be limited to essential personnel.
- Compliance will be necessary to ensure efficiency and harmony.
- **Units should not invest in thermometers.**

Contact Tracing

- Contact tracing identifies people who were in close contact with someone who has Covid-19.
- The protocol for contact tracing is as per HSE guidelines.
- The latest Guidelines are available - <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/testing/contact-tracing.html>

Step 1

- **Education and awareness**
- All Members, Tutors, Volunteers, and Parents/Guardians should have an understanding of this educational module.
- Ensure continued awareness of safety protocols.
- Educational materials such as posters should be visible throughout Comhaltas facilities and where Comhaltas activities take place.

Step 2

- **Pre-attendance screening**
- Complete the Health Questionnaire before your initial return to Comhaltas activities.
- Each individual will be required to sign a declaration at each subsequent activity to confirm their health status has not changed.
- If your temperature is above 37.5C, you must remain at home and consider contacting your GP.
- If you develop symptoms, you should not attend Comhaltas facilities/activities. You should self-isolate and contact your GP.

Step 3

- **Adhere to hygiene best practice**
- Frequent hand washing, sanitising, and regular cleaning and washing of high touch points and equipment.
- Avoid sharing pens, music sheets, instruments, touching high contact surfaces, e.g. door handles.
- Use of face masks, where applicable.

Step 4

- **Observe social distance guidelines**
- This is 2 metres until further notice.

Step 5.

- **Avoid or reduce body contact to a minimum**
- Shaking hands to be completely avoided.

Step 6.

- Toilets to be available on a controlled basis.

Step 7.

Travel to and from Comhaltas activities

- Follow Government physical distancing advice in relation to all forms of transport to Comhaltas activities
- If possible, walk or cycle to the venue.
- If travelling by private vehicle, such as a car, only travel with members of the same household.
- Avoid the use of public transport where possible (if it is the only option follow Government guidelines).

Step 8.

- **Refrain from events such as meetings**
- Eliminate all non-essential gatherings and put robust control measures in place for essential interaction.
- Meetings should be held in spaces that allow for compliance with Government social distancing guidelines - currently 2 metres.
- All other meetings should be held online.
- In line with Government Roadmap guidelines, social events are not permitted.

This lesson contains key information for Parents/Guardians to comply with the Safe Return Guidelines.

Before return to Comhaltas activities

- All Parents should have an understanding of this educational module.
- All children must have completed a Health Questionnaire before the first Comhaltas activity.
- Each individual will be required to sign a declaration at each subsequent activity to confirm their health status has not changed.
- Check or have your child's body temperature recorded just prior to entering the Comhaltas facility/activity.
- If your temperature is above 37.5C you must stay at home and consider contacting your GP for advice or referral.
- The onus is on the Parent/Guardian to complete this.

Covid Supervisor

- All Parents/Guardians must ensure that Children/Youths attending activities are fully aware of the Guidelines enforced in the current phase by the Covid Supervisor.
- Parents/Guardians must ensure that the Covid Supervisor and tutors are made fully aware in advance of any medical conditions a student may have.
- Parents/Guardians must ensure that their contact details are up-to-date and with the Comhaltas Unit if contact has to be made.

Travel to and from the Comhaltas facility/activity

- Parents or Guardians not directly involved in the activity are not permitted to attend or observe the activity.
- The driver must either stay in the vehicle or leave the facility and return at the appointed collection time.
- Students to arrive no more than 5 minutes prior to activity commencing and be collected immediately after activity.
- Parents/Guardians must check the students, and their own, temperature prior to departing for the activity.
- Students must not physically greet each other at any stage.
- Parents/Guardians of students with specific medical conditions can remain in car park in case of emergency, providing they adhere to all Guidelines in place in that phase.

Check-in process

- Parents/Guardians should complete the Health Questionnaire on behalf of their children prior to attending the first activity only.
- Each Parent/Guardian will be required to sign a declaration at each subsequent activity to confirm the health status of their child has not changed.
- Parents/Guardians should not approach check in areas where possible and must adhere to social distancing guidelines at all times.

Facilities

- All children should have their own equipment/instruments and must NEVER share these with anyone else. These items include pens, paper, water bottles, instruments, etc.
- Comhaltas units should establish systems for drop off/collection points to avoid traffic jams.

Social distancing behaviours

- Parents/Guardians must ensure their children are aware of etiquette guidelines.
- Students and Parents/Guardians must refrain from handshakes and any physical contact.
- Practice good cough/sneeze etiquette and dispose of any used tissue in a responsible manner.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Remain apart from other Parents/Guardians during activity.

Parents/Guardians should promote behaviours in children that will reduce the spread of the virus

- Examples of good behaviours include:
- Staying at home when appropriate.
- Contact your GP for advice if you or anyone in your household display symptoms.
- Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
- Adequate hygiene supplies.
- Signs and messages.

Health Questionnaire

Before you return to Comhaltas activities, please complete all of the following questions. This form will be treated in the strictest of confidence and comply with all GDPR regulations.

Branch: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 . Do you believe you may currently have COVID-19?

Yes No

2. Have you had any of the following symptoms of Covid-19 in the past 14 days?

High Temperature (i.e. over 37.5c)

Yes No

A new continuous cough

Yes No

New unexplained shortness of breath

Yes No

Loss of sense of smell, of taste or distortion of taste

Yes No

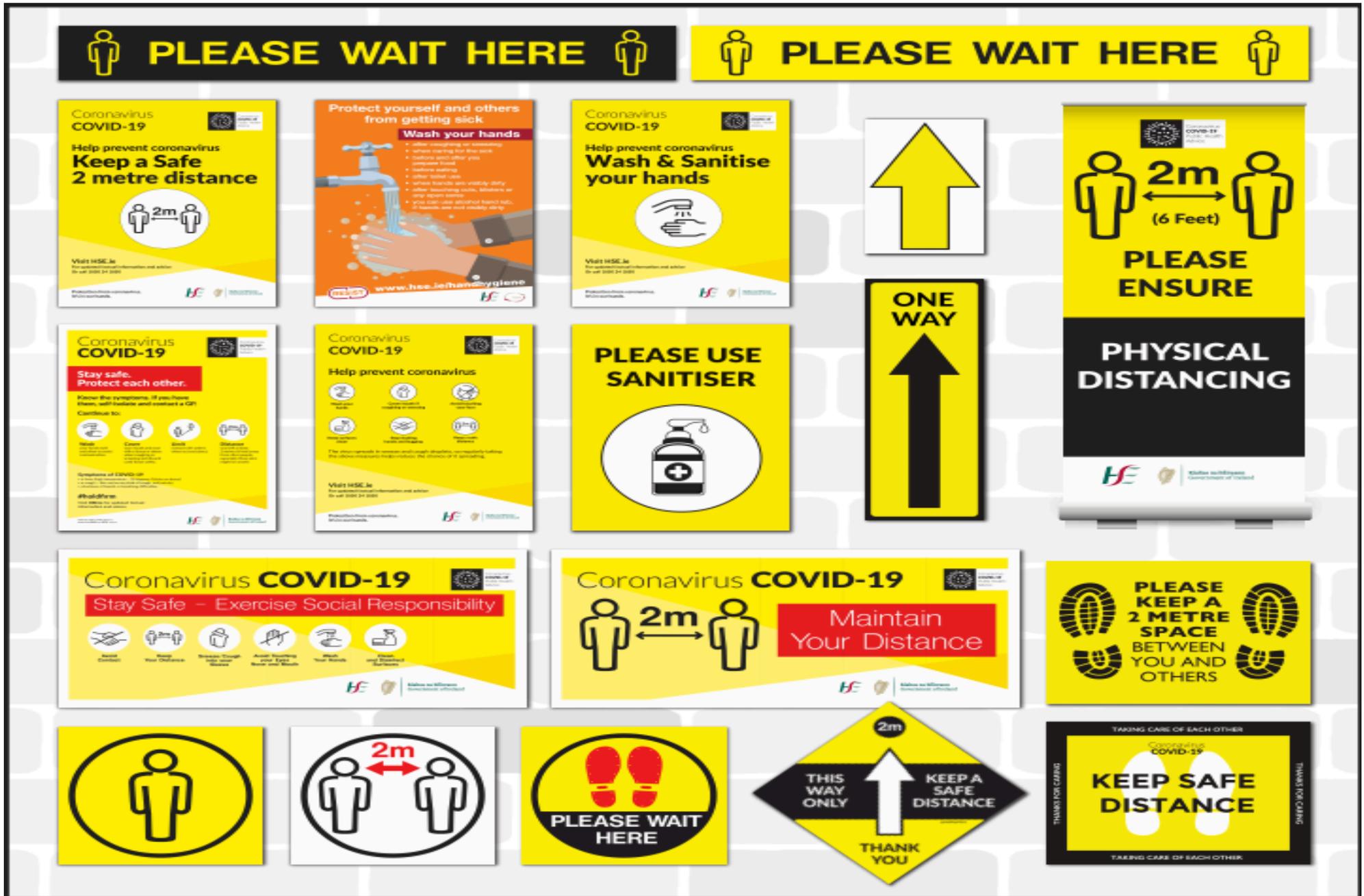
If you answer **YES** to any of the following please do not attend any Comhaltas facility or activity and we strongly advise you follow the medical advice you receive or seek medical advice.

If you have answered **NO** to all of the above questions you may resume Comhaltas activities.

Please sign this form to confirm that the details above are true to the best of your knowledge, and to confirm that you understand the risks involved in participation, are participating on a voluntary basis and that you may opt-out at any time.

SIGNED: _____ DATE: _____

SAMPLE COVID-19 SIGNAGE





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*Thank You for completing this COVID-19
educational module.*

*Please monitor www.hse.ie for further
COVID-19 updates.
Go raibh maith agat.*

Ni neart go cur le chéile.