



**FIGHTING
WORDS**

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Fighting Words Covid-19 Response Plan & Induction

Foreword

Strong communication and a shared collaborative approach between Fighting Words management and staff/volunteers is key to protecting against the spread of Covid-19 in the workplace, per Government guidelines. It is important that staff and volunteers have the required skills and training to perform their tasks competently in a healthy, safe manner.

The Covid-19 Response Plan and Induction is an effective way of:

- Increasing the knowledge of staff and volunteers about Covid-19 while at work to mitigate the risk of spread of Covid-19
- Identifying the health and safety hazards that staff and volunteers may face from Covid-19
- Identifying precautions and control measures required when carrying out work activities
- Addressing issues that arise so that staff, volunteers, programme participants and visitors are kept safe at all times

This short guide and presentation for Fighting Words Covid-19 Response Plan and Induction endeavours to reflect these aspects and issues of Covid-19 so that these aspects can be discussed at induction talks by staff and volunteer teams.

Induction about Covid-19 will encourage and reinforce the critical need for safe and healthy behaviours. This presentation and guide will assist in discussing the aspects and issues of Covid-19 per the Government protocol and addressing the critical need for all concerned to follow public health measures while at work.

The guidance is based on current Government and HSE public health advice and should be drawn on by all staff and facilitators of Fighting Words programmes in carrying out risk assessments to suit particular activities, tasks and programme environments.

The immediate objectives of staff and supervisors of Fighting Words teams and programmes should be to brief all involved on:

- The specific work to be done by the team and individual staff members/volunteers within the team.
- The hazards and risks associated with that work, particularly in the context of Covid-19, above and beyond those set out before the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Precautions and control measures needed to work safely, especially ensuring that those work activities identified with a high level of inherent Covid-19 risk are always in place.

- Ensure maintenance of an accurate record of staff and volunteers attending induction. Please note that all attendees must sign the attendance record with their own pen, per current guidelines.

Should any member of staff/volunteer have an issue or concern, they should consult their manager and/or or the Health and Safety Officer.

We ask that everyone take care when coming back to Fighting Words and take special heed of the advice in the induction. This document will be updated as necessary in order to comply with Government guidelines and best practice.

Sara Bennett
General Manager & Health and Safety Officer
February 2022



Covid-19 Policy Statement

This Covid-19 Policy outlines our commitment as an employer to implement the Covid-19 Response Plan and help prevent the spread of the virus. The policy will be signed and dated by the Executive Director and brought to the attention of our staff, programme participants, contractors and volunteers.

Fighting Words is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all staff, volunteers and programme participants. We have developed the following Covid-19 Response Plan and have reviewed it in line with the updated [Work Safely Protocol](#). All 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 update this Plan in consultation with our staff and programme coordinators.
- Provide up to date information to our workers on the public health advice issued by [HSE.ie](#) and [Gov.ie](#)
- Ensure all staff and volunteers receive an induction/familiarisation briefing on Covid-19 infection prevention and control (IPC) measures.
- Display information on the signs and symptoms of Covid-19, and other IPC measures.
- Facilitate the appointment of at least one Lead Worker Representative, in consultation with our staff.
- Communicate the identity of the appointed Lead Worker Representative(s) and their role.
- Keep staff and volunteers informed about the importance of adhering to hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and physical distancing requirements.
- Adapt or continue to adapt the workplace to facilitate physical distancing

and other Covid-19 IPC measures. In doing so, Fighting Words will ensure that workers are not inadvertently exposed to additional occupational health and safety hazards and risks.

- Where a Rapid Antigen Diagnostic Testing (RADT) regime is being proposed, discuss and agree in advance the implementation and administration of any regime with our staff, including our Lead Worker Representative(s) and the Safety Representative(s).
- Adapt or continue to adapt the workplace to protect workers from Covid-19 exposure to/from others (public, programme participants, co-workers).
- Take into account workers' individual risk factors per [HSE guidelines](#).
- Take into account workers' fitness for work following Covid-19 (or a suspected Covid-19 case) absence in line with Health and Safety Authority [advice](#).
- Keep a contact log to help with contact tracing. The purpose of the log is to be used by public health in the case of an outbreak.
- Follow procedures in place in the event of someone displaying signs or symptoms of Covid-19 while at work or in the workplace.
- Provide clear instructions for staff and volunteers to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of Covid-19 during working hours/scheduled programmes.
- Inform staff and volunteers that they must stay and home from work and contact their GP if they develop signs or symptoms of Covid-19, or feel unwell, even if they receive a negative RADT result.
- Identify a lead person (s) to communicate specific measures to workers whose first language is not English as required.
- Ensure contingency measures are in place to address the effects of Covid-19 in the workplace.
- Continue with the cleaning measures in place and disinfection measures, where necessary, in line with government advice.

All staff and volunteers will be consulted on an ongoing basis and feedback is encouraged regarding any concerns, issues or suggestions.

This can be done through the Worker Representative(s):

- Emmy Lugoye

- Mark Davidson

Signed: _____

Executive Director

Date: _____

Responsible Persons for Performing Tasks

Fighting Words has identified suitably trained person(s) to help with ensuring that the Fighting Words Covid Response Plan is implemented and checklists are completed.

Persons have been identified who have agreed to take responsibility for carrying out tasks such as:

- Role of Lead Worker Representative(s)
- Use of checklists to identify any areas for improvement
- Regular checks to ensure the Plan is implemented
- Review of risk assessments and the safety statement
- Renewal of statutory certification, where needed
- Training
- Reviewing emergency procedures and first aid

We have consulted with the persons responsible for these tasks and have:

- Briefed them on the tasks and their responsibilities
- Entered their name against the relevant task(s) in the Responsible Persons table (see below) and asked each responsible person to sign to indicate their agreement with carrying out the task.

Responsible Persons Task Register (Non-Exhaustive)			
No.	Tasks (non-exhaustive list)	Responsible Person(s)	Signature
1	Person responsible for overall implementation of the Plan	Sara Bennett	
2	Identification and training of Lead Worker Representative (LWR)	Sara Bennett	
3	Planning and Preparing to Return to Work (Opening or re-opening the workplace after closure)	Sara Bennett	
4	Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Measures (Checklist No.2)	Sara Bennett	
5	Covid-19 Induction (Checklist No.3)	Sara Bennett	
6	Dealing with a Suspected Case of Covid-19 (Checklist No.4)	Sara Bennett	
7	Cleaning and Disinfection (Checklist No.5)	Sara Bennett	
8	Worker Information (Checklist No.6)	Sara Bennett	
9	Lead Worker Representative (LWR) (Checklist No.7)	Emmy Lugoye Mark Davidson	
10	Pre-Return to Work forms:	Sara Bennett	

11	Induction of Volunteer Teams in Covid Response Plans and Guidelines	All location coordinators	

Employer Information

Employer Name:	Fighting Words CLG
Workplace Address:	Behan Square, 12-16 Russell Street, Dublin 1 D01 WD53
Executive Director in the Workplace:	Seán Love
Lead Worker Representative(s) (LWR):	Emmy Lugoye and Mark Davidson
Type of Business:	Registered charity providing free programming in creative writing for children, young people and adults with additional needs
Number of Workers (including full-time, part-time, contract and agency):	5 plus 400+ registered volunteers
Up-to-date Information on all Workers (including full-time, part-time, contract and agency):	Yes
Phone:	01 894 4576
Email:	info@fightingwords.ie

CORONAVIRUS (Covid-19) –How is it spread?

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 up to 14 days for symptoms to show.

They can be similar to symptoms of cold and flu.

Covid-19 is spread from an infected person's mouth or nose in small liquid particles, from larger respiratory droplets to smaller aerosols.

You could get the virus if you:



- Come into close contact with an infected person when they **cough, sneeze, speak, sing or breathe** within a 1-metre range.
- Are in **poorly ventilated and/or crowded indoor settings.**
- **Touch surfaces** that someone who has the virus has coughed and sneezed on and **bring your unwashed hands to your face** (eyes, nose or mouth).

This is why it is important to ensure that:

- Staff and volunteers who have symptoms or are feeling unwell must remain out of work
- Occupancy remains low
- Indoor spaces are kept well-ventilated

Covid-19 Symptoms

It can take up to 14 days for symptoms of Covid-19 to appear. They can be similar to cold and flu.

Common symptoms include – but are not limited to:

- **Fever** - high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above
- **Cough** - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry
- **Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties**
- **Runny or blocked nose**
- **Loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** – this means you have noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal
- **Nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea**
- **Aches, pains or tiredness**
- **Sore throat**
- **Headache**

You may not have all of these symptoms, or your symptoms may be mild. Symptoms may vary for different age groups and variants of the virus. If in doubt, contact your GP.

To protect you, the volunteer team, staff and programme participants and your family, if you have symptoms, it is essential that you:

- **Immediately make phone contact with your Fighting Words manager/supervisor**
- **Do not attend at the Fighting Words centre**
- **Visit www.hse.ie/coronavirus OR telephone your GP or the HSE Helpline at 1850 241850 and follow advice received.**

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS: CLOSE CONTACT

What close contact means:

When you have been in close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19, you will get a text from the HSE to let you know that you are a close contact.

You could have been in contact with a positive case:

- in your home (sometimes called a 'household close contact')
- outside your home (sometimes called a 'non-household close contact' or 'community close contact')

If you are a close contact, what should you do?

The advice from the HSE varies, depending on your age, your vaccination status, if you have symptoms (or not) and/or if your child is a close contact and/or if you have a positive test result.

[Please check here for the most complete and up to date information from the HSE.](#)

MANAGING A SUSPECTED CASE OF COVID-19 AT FIGHTING WORDS

If you develop symptoms at Fighting Words:

Tell your manager/supervisor immediately. Fighting Words has a process in place. Follow the guidelines and advice.

You will need to:

- Isolate immediately from other staff – in Dublin the Isolation Room is the office of the main centre
- Wear a [medical grade or respiratory](#) face covering correctly
 - Click [here](#) for guidance
- Keep a distance of least **2 metres** from others
- Go home or to a medical facility as soon as it is safe to do so.
- [Self-isolate](#) at home
- Do not use public transport of any kind to go home

If you cannot go home immediately:

- Remain self-isolating in the building and phone your GP
- Avoid touching people, surfaces and objects
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissues when you cough or sneeze. Bin these tissues in a waste bag.

**Follow all guidelines and advice provided
by Fighting Words staff**

PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF COVID-19: INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL (IPC) MEASURES

As the roll-out of the National Vaccination Programme continues, everyone is encouraged to maintain their adherence to all the Public Health advice and recommendations.

The best ways to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in any setting, including the workplace, is still to practice physical distancing, adopt proper hand hygiene, follow respiratory etiquette and increase ventilation.

Follow this advice as strictly as possible and encourage others to follow it too.

Hand Hygiene



Everyone at Fighting Words must be familiar with and follow hand hygiene guidance and advice.

- Remember to wash your hands with soap and water or with hand sanitiser for **at least 20 seconds** and in particular:
 - After coughing and sneezing
 - Before and after eating
 - Before and after preparing food
 - Before and after removing your face covering
 - If in contact with someone who is displaying any Covid-19 symptoms
 - Before and after being on public transport

- Before and after being in a crowd
- When arriving and leaving the workplace/other sites
- When entering and exiting vehicles
- Before having a cigarette or vaping
- When hands are dirty. If visibly dirty, wash hands with soap and water
- After toilet use
- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth and nose
- Have access to facilities to support hand hygiene (own hand sanitiser/wipes)
- Do not share objects that touch your mouth, like bottles or cups
- Use your own pen for signing in and out.

Fighting Words will:

- Ensure that appropriate hygiene facilities are and materials are in place to accommodate everyone adhering to hand hygiene measures
- Make available advice on training on [performing effective hand hygiene](#).
- Display posters showing how to washing hands at appropriate locations
- Provide hand sanitisers where washing facilities cannot be accessed.

Respiratory Hygiene



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

Everyone must:

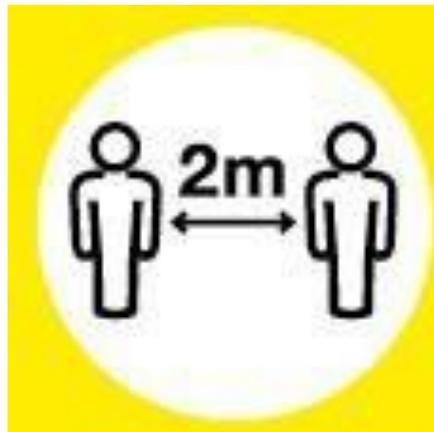
- Adopt good respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette.

- Follow respiratory hygiene and guidance.
- Follow good practice on the [safe use, storage, disposal and cleaning of face masks and coverings](#).

Fighting Words will:

- Provide tissues as well as bins/bags for their disposal.
- Empty bins at regular intervals.
- Provide advice on the [safe use, storage and disposal of face masks/coverings as well as the safe cleaning of face coverings](#).

Physical Distancing



Physical distancing is one of the most important measures in reducing the spread of Covid-19. The current recommended distance to be maintained between people to minimise the risk of transmission is **2 metres**.

General Principles – Until Further Notice

- All Fighting Words staff and volunteer mentors/illustrators are **required** to complete the [Pre-Return to Work Form](#) before arriving for a workshop or other event.
- **The wearing of a face covering is mandatory during workshops and events.** Fighting Words will provide face coverings if required so don't worry if you forget!

- For work in office areas, wear a face mask or covering in specific areas of the office, where physical distancing is difficult
- Fighting Words operates a **no hand shaking policy**. This includes **high fives and fist bumps**.
- There will be **no access to tea and coffee making facilities in the offices** for the volunteer team.
- **Proper ventilation**, e.g. open windows, will be in place.
- Use the **one-way system for entering and exiting** the centre.
- In the offices, **free office capacity must be used as much as reasonably practicable**. Multiple occupancy is to be avoided and physical distances must be maintained.
- Staggered start and finish times and flexible working hours are in place for Fighting Words staff
- **Organising space** in such a way that physical distances are maintained.
 - All areas of the Fighting Words centre should be used for workshops and/or administrative work.
 - Weather permitting, the outdoor patio space can be used for activities.
 - There should be no more than two staff members working in the office of the main centre at any one time. Face coverings will be required if there are more than two people in the office in the main centre.
- **Organising teams and groups of participants into pods** to work together consistently. Teams should be as small as is reasonably practicable in the context of the work to be done/programme to be delivered.
- **Organising breaks (as applicable)** to facilitate maintenance of physical distancing.
- **Conducting meetings and programmes using online remote**

means. Where in-person meetings and programmes are necessary, the length of the meeting or programme and the numbers attending should be kept to a minimum at all times. Participants must maintain physical distancing at all times.

- Implementing physical distancing during any **outdoor work activity.**

During Workshops

In settings where 2-metre staff/volunteer separation cannot be ensured by organisational means, such as during workshops, all staff and volunteers must:

- As stated above, **the wearing of a face covering is mandatory during workshops and other programmes.**
- **Maintain a distance of at least 1 metre**, or as much distance as reasonably practicable.
- **Use hand washing facilities and other hand hygiene aids available**, e.g. hand sanitiser, so that you can wash your hands as soon as tasks are complete.

Cleaning



Fighting Words is committed to the thorough and regular cleaning of frequently touched areas our centres. If disinfection of contaminated surfaces is needed, this will be done in addition to cleaning.

To this end, we will:

- Ensure contact/touch surfaces such as tabletops, work equipment, door handles and light switches are visibly clean at all times and are cleaned at least twice daily.
- Toilet facilities will be cleaned twice per day and whenever facilities are visibly dirty.
- Essential cleaning materials are available to keep workspaces clean: disinfection products, wipes and waste bins and bags).
- Waste bins will be emptied at least twice daily – or when three quarters full – and waste will be put out for collection.
- Waste such as used tissues, wipes and cleaning materials should be disposed of in the regular waste stream and hands washed immediately after disposal.

Staff will be provided with cleaning materials to keep their own workspace hygienically clean and advised to regularly clean any personal items brought in from home.

Alcohol-based (or non-alcohol based) hand sanitisers may be used.

When choosing a hand sanitiser, we ensure it is effective against COVID-19 (coronavirus) and check the Biocidal Product Registers at the Department of Agriculture and the Marine (DAFM) to make sure the product is registered, and can be used. Where an alcohol-based hand sanitiser is provided, it contains a minimum of 60% alcohol.

Cleaning staff will be given information and instruction in relation to the new procedures.

Visitors and Contractors

Please note that the required infection prevention and control (IPC) measures apply to visitors and contractors to Fighting Words.

HEALTH AND SAFETY DOCUMENTATION

- Relevant health and safety documentation will be reviewed to take account of any changes to the work activity that may arise following implementation of the public health recommendations.
- Relevant changes to documentation will be communicated to staff and volunteers.
- It is important to note that all existing health and safety and child/vulnerable adult provisions continue to apply

Managing Fighting Words Activities Until Further Notice

Managing Programmes at Centres

As restrictions ease following the lockdowns of 2020 and 2021, it is important to recognise that students, teachers and volunteers will remain cautious about interacting with others.

Online vs In-Person – Clear Communication with Volunteer Team

Schools may opt to retain online workshops in the coming months, so it is important to communicate with the volunteer team when scheduling events if they will be in person or online. ***It should be clear on the website calendars whether events will take place online or in person.***

IMPORTANT: Vaccination Status and Workshops

Regardless of the vaccination status of staff, volunteers, interns and programme participants, public health infection prevention and control (e.g., physical distancing, hand hygiene, face coverings, adequate ventilation) will remain in place until further notice.

Fighting Words can reopen for programmes in line with the advice for organised indoor group activities in the arts from Monday, 24 January 2022.

Because we work with children under age 12, groups at Fighting Words will be of **mixed patrons**, in other words, people who are both vaccinated/recently recovered and unvaccinated. As a result, events can be run bearing in mind the following:

- **Participants will be in pods of up to six**
- **The number of pods will have regard to the size of the venue.**
- **Adults are required to wear masks**
- **There will be substantial social distance between pods OR 2-metre distance between individuals**

- **All centres must be well ventilated, with windows and doors open**
- **Regular cleaning is paramount. Chair and cushions should be wiped, as well as door handles and light switches.**
- **Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette must be maintained**
- **Participants should bring their own pens or pencils**

Please note that the pods EXCLUDES adult leaders and teachers, so we can host one mentor (volunteer/intern/member of staff) per pod and the accompanying teachers or members of staff.

In Dublin, the number of pods will be limited to four to allow for all participants to see the screen.

In addition:

- Participants should be socially distanced at reception, with the outdoor courtyard used as well
- Do not use the magic door
- The volunteer team should not be in the office/kitchen areas for tea and coffee
- No handshaking, fist pumps or hugs among the volunteer team

From Spring 2022 – Further Easing of Restrictions

At the time of writing (January 2022), Irish Government expects the current restrictions to remain in place until 28 February 2022.

What follows are guidelines for when restrictions will ease.

- The formal requirements/mandates for mask wearing and physical distancing during workshops will be removed.
- The volunteer team may once again enter the office/kitchen areas for tea and coffee.
- Fighting Words will, however, remain committed to regular cleaning of all areas, and ventilation of workshop areas as well

as any further Government guidance.

For example, the Government has advised that it may be the case that in specific sectors, distancing and mask wearing may be re-introduced. Fighting Words will pay close attention in this area.

The following measures will **remain in place**:

- All volunteers and staff will be advised of the Fighting Words Covid-19 policy and procedures prior to workshops and/or as part of the volunteer training programme
- Appropriate self-isolation of anyone with Covid-19 symptoms and anyone with a positive test result
- Ongoing review of guidance regarding close contacts
- Masks will still be required on public transport, healthcare settings and indoor retail

COMPLIANCE AND MONITORING

- Everyone at Fighting Words must adhere to the requirements of this response plan and we will ensure that the plan and associated risk assessments are kept up to date.
- Monitoring compliance will require ensuring that physical distancing, hygiene rules and Covid-19 control measures are being adhered to and maintained to reduce the risk of the spread of Covid-19.
- It is important to note that compliance with Covid-19 control measures is the responsibility of everyone and must be supported by all to protect health and reduce the spread of Covid-19.
- Compliance checks with Covid-19 may include checking the following measures are in place and being adhered to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adequate Signage• Physical Distancing• Hand Washing• Respiratory Etiquette• Safety Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Risk Assessment• Increased cleaning regimes where required• Staggering breaks, lunchtimes, etc• Record keeping, e.g. signing in to assist in contact tracing
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KEY CONTACTS

We are here to help and advise about Covid-19. Contact any of the following for advice and guidance or if you have a concern:

- Your Fighting Words location co-ordinator
- Health and Safety Officer – Sara Bennett
 - sara@fightingwords.ie
- Lead Worker Representatives – Emmy Lugoye and Mark Davidson
 - emmy@fightingwords.ie
 - mark@fightingwords.ie

WELL-BEING

The Covid-19 pandemic and related issues can be worrying and affect your mental health.

There are many online resources available, and you can contact your GP as well.

Health Service Executive (HSE):

- [Minding Your Mental Health During The Coronavirus Pandemic](#)
- [Connecting For Life](#)

Government of Ireland

- [Healthy Ireland](#)

A Final Note...

Thank you to the entire Fighting Words team for maintaining an outstanding array of online programming since March 2020.

As we return to our centres, it is essential that we follow the Government and HSE guidelines at home, at work and while volunteering.

- Take ownership of your safety and the safety of others
- Wash your hands and practice good respiratory etiquette
- If in doubt, stop and ask a supervisor or local co-ordinator

**THANK YOU –
AND CONTINUE TO STAY SAFE!**