



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

The Lir Academy COVID-19 Masterplan 2021- 2022

Easing of COVID-19 Restrictions for Term Recommencing November 8th, 2021

This document is a revised version of the original The Lir Academy COVID-19 Resumption of Activity Masterplan developed by The Lir's Covid Committee in 2020 and updated in response to ongoing changes to protocols throughout 2020 and 2021. You can see that version of the masterplan [at this link](#).

This scaled back version of the original masterplan reflects the learnings and diligence of the committee in ensuring the safety of all members of The Lir Community since 2020. It also is a testament to the vigilance of our staff and students in complying with the protocols necessary to keep our classes running.

As we welcome our students back to the academic year 2021-2022, this document is a revised version of the extensive safety precautions that we had in place last year. There are some easing of restrictions, but care and attention will still be required to ensure that safety is upheld. We will continue to review practices on an ongoing basis in response to guidance from the relevant authorities.

Thanks to all the Covid Committee who will continue to review this version of the Masterplan and implement appropriate measures in their departments as required.

We look forward to the year ahead and us all working together again more closely.

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SECTION ONE - THE BUILDING

1) Health and Hygiene Measures

1.1. Signage

The key to keeping the academy safe during the current phase of the country's response to Covid-19 is strong communication of key messages. Clear and visible signage will remain in designated areas to ensure staff, students and patrons remain aware of their personal responsibilities in preventing the spread of Covid-19.

1.2. Sanitising Stations

Sanitising stations will remain in place throughout the academy for the continued use of everyone who accesses the building.

1.3. Heating and Ventilation

Ventilation will continue to be maintained.

The existing heating and ventilation systems are in line with COVID-19 guidelines and The Lir Academy will maintain ongoing communications with the Trinity College Dublin Estates and Facilities department to ensure best practice in terms of air handling, ventilation and the installation of CO₂ monitors where necessary.

1.4. Designated Isolation Room

Fully equipped isolation rooms and protocol will remain in place as per public health guidelines.

1.5. Advanced Induction Session

All staff members and students will go through induction training as part of the return to classes on the 8th of November 2021. This will be through various media including video inductions, written material and in person.

Staff and students will be asked to demonstrate the completion of the COVID-19 induction and they will have the opportunity to ask questions and clarifications before reopening. The Lir Academy will continue to follow guidelines issued by Trinity College Dublin, including the completion of the pre-return-to-work questionnaire and the return to college induction session.

2) General COVID-19 Protocols

2.1. Regular Cleaning and Sanitising of Rooms and Surfaces

The Lir Academy will continue to implement the cleaning of work areas at regular intervals throughout the day by staff and students in addition to the twice daily building clean by our professional contract cleaners, Monday to Friday. Cleaning materials will be provided to staff and students to disinfect touch points as necessary.

2.2. Social Distancing

Following guidance from Trinity College Dublin, The Lir will be operating at full capacity and without social distancing from November 8th, 2021. Face coverings will be required indoors when operating at this level of reduced restrictions. [Staff and students are encouraged to participate in UniCov to assist with the early detection of Covid-19 on campus, using rapid testing available through Trinity College.](#) <https://www.tcd.ie/ttmi/unicov/>¹

2.3. Control of Access

A separate entrance and exit system will continue to be used by staff and students, entering through the main Lir front door and exiting at the back of the building. A two-way traffic flow system will be maintained throughout the building. This will be kept under review. Sign-in systems will be maintained for contact tracing purposes.

2.4. Personal Protection Equipment

Face coverings will be compulsory indoors while maintaining zero social distancing. The removal of face coverings for certain teaching activities will only be considered after a risk assessment has been completed by the Lir Covid-19 Safety Committee and in consultation with Trinity College Dublin.

The HSE are now providing free 3-ply masks to all students. Students can arrange the collection of their free masks by contacting the Lir reception.

2.5. Podding

Due to the removal of social distancing, podding by class group will only be observed during lunch. Students are required to consume meals in their designated areas only.

While podding has been an effective safety measure during the pandemic the removal of it in all other areas will be a significant move in reintroducing peer to peer learning.

Safety measures will remain in place at all times with regards to the use of face coverings indoors, good hand hygiene and cough etiquette. Staff and students are also encouraged to get vaccinated against Covid-19 as an added protection and to help contain the spread of the virus. Podding will be kept under constant review.

2.6. Contact Tracing

¹ Updated 18.11.2021

The Lir Academy will continue to implement a daily attendance system to facilitate contact tracing and identify rooms used. In addition, staff and students will be encouraged to download and use the COVID Tracker App.

3) Reducing Building Capacity and Hiring Additional Spaces

Following the guidance of Trinity College Dublin, The Lir will operate at full capacity and therefore will not require additional hired space for the academic year 2021-22.

4) Building Modifications

Safety measures will remain in place while operating at full capacity such as the requirement of a face covering indoors and frequent hand sanitisation. Further information is outlined below on specific areas.

- **Main entrance:** A one way system will remain for now. Sanitising stations and signage will remain in place
- **Foyer:** full capacity, face covering required
- **Bar:** will operate as per public health guidelines
- **Bathrooms:** full capacity, face covering required
- **Corridors:** directional arrows will remain in place instructing users to keep to one side. Face coverings required.
- **Workshops, Studios & Rehearsal Rooms:** full capacity, face covering needed
- **Staffroom / Kitchen/Green Room:** full capacity, face covering required. The following shared kitchenware will be reinstated with increased hygiene measures: kettles, microwaves and fridge. Staff and students will be required to sanitise their hands before use and clean the area down after use. Shared kitchenware such as cutlery, plates and mugs will not be permitted. Staff and students are required to use their own and take home daily. Preparation areas to be kept clear and clean after use. Staff are encouraged to consume meals in their offices if available to them and students to consume their meals in their designated rooms. When removing masks to consume meals, social distancing should be maintained and limited to 15 minutes where possible.
- **Offices:** single use offices will be maintained or shared with a two-metre social distance. Masks to be worn in shared offices unless staff have self-declared they are fully vaccinated against Covid-19. Hand sanitiser and wipes will be provided to each office for regular cleaning of touchpoints
- **Resource Room:** full capacity, face covering required
- **Student Lockers:** full use, face covering required

5) Public Access and External Use of the Building

Prior to arrival onsite, the public will receive relevant protocols that apply to not only the nature of their visit, but also includes the most up to date government guidance. This includes the type of documentation required to enter the venue (vaccine certs etc), the safety measures in place to ensure that both audience members and venue staff operate onsite safely under our current protocols etc. This external footfall includes short course attendees, school groups, audience members, public booking tours, couriers etc.

Please see more in the relevant section of the appendix document – [available at this link.](#)

SECTION TWO - ENSURING STAFF AND STUDENT SAFETY

6) Governance, Supervision and Reporting Procedures

Governance, supervision and reporting related to COVID-19 will continue to be implemented by a COVID-19 Safety Committee following the existing hierarchies of responsibility of The Lir Academy. The Covid-19 management structure implemented in September 2020 will remain in place for the academic year 2021-22 and details can be found in the appendix document - [available here.](#)

Bi-weekly meetings will be held, where the aforementioned representatives can raise any issues about the safe use of the building and changes that need to be taken into consideration. The COVID-19 Safety Committee will conduct regular reviews to ensure that the protocols are in line with government and health authorities' updates and that they are adapted into The Lir Academy's activities.

7) Staff / Working Protocols

- The Covid-19 Compliance Officer will ensure that all staff members have completed a back to work declaration 3 days in advance of returning.
- Staff are required to do a daily self-check of symptoms before coming to The Lir.
- If staff develop any COVID-19 symptoms they need to inform their line manager immediately, self-isolate and follow their doctors' advice.
- Staff who become ill with COVID-19 can return to work 10 days after the onset of the symptoms and 5 days since their last high temperature.
- If the member of staff has tested negative for COVID-19 they may return to work when they have not had symptoms for 48 hours.
- Persons returning to Ireland must continue to refer to advice issued by the HSE.
- An ongoing communication system and an open-door policy will continue to be implemented to ensure that staff feel safe and supported at all times.

8) Mental Health Support

Mental health support resources will continue to be provided to members of staff by Inspire Workplaces and to students by Trinity College Dublin.

Additional onsite mental health resources will be provided to students during the 2021-22 academic year, details of which will be communicated to students by the Academic Administrator.

The Lir Academy will keep up to date with the resources available, keep staff and students updated and liaise between the service providers and the staff/students who need to avail of their services.

9) Staff and First Aid Training

Staff and students will undergo induction before returning to The Lir on November 8th, 2021. COVID Compliance Officer training will continue to be provided to staff as necessary. Personal Protection Equipment and best practice around COVID-19 will continue to be incorporated in our first aid training.

The Lir Academy will follow further guidance from Trinity College Dublin concerning the upskilling and training dates for first aid.

10) Personal Responsibility – Students and Staff

Personal responsibility will continue to be central to making The Lir Academy a safe space to continue teaching and training activities. Staff and students must continue to observe the health and safety practices detailed in this chapter to ensure a smooth running of all Lir Academy facilities.

10.1. Students

- Students will be required to complete a daily self-check on Covid-19 symptoms before arrival at The Lir Academy.
- Students are required to stay at home if feeling unwell and contact their GP for further advice.
- Students will be required to wear a face covering indoors at all times unless an activity-specific Risk Assessment deems it unnecessary. Free HSE 3-ply masks for students are available to collect from reception.
- All students will be encouraged to download and use the SafeZone app and the COVID Tracker app.
- All students will be required to carry a pocket hand sanitiser at all times.
- Hand sanitisers can be refilled at designated stations throughout the building
- Students will take personal responsibility for keeping their workspace clean and sanitised at all times, in the rehearsal room and workshops.
- Students must take personal responsibility outside of The Lir Academy and make sure they conduct social interactions in a responsible manner and following public health guidelines
- If a member of their household is confirmed to have COVID-19, students must take the responsibility to stay at home, inform The Lir Academy immediately and follow the procedures outlined in Section 5.

- Students will be required to adhere to the indicated circulation routes.
- Venues or rooms cannot be used outside of timetabled classes without permission and previous consultation with the Venue Manager.
- Students will take personal responsibility for getting acquainted with the new ways of using the building through the intensive inductions and informational material provided by The Lir Academy.
- Students who are travelling internationally are expected to follow guidelines from the Irish government in relation to quarantine periods where applicable.

10.2 Staff

- Staff will be required to complete a daily self-check on Covid-19 symptoms before arrival at The Lir.
- All staff will be encouraged to download and use the SafeZone app and the COVID Tracker app.
- Staff are required to stay at home if feeling unwell and contact their GP for further advice.
- Staff are required to wear face coverings indoors. Staff may remove face coverings to teach a class if they are 2 metres away from students at all times.
- All staff will be required to carry a pocket hand sanitiser at all times and routinely sanitise touch points and workspaces after use throughout the day.
- Hand sanitisers can be refilled at designated stations throughout The Lir and blue roll will be provided by The Lir.
- Venues or rooms cannot be used outside of timetabled classes without permission and previous consultation with the Venue Manager.
- Staff will take personal responsibility for keeping their workspace clean and sanitised at all times.
- Staff will be asked to observe health and safety rules in their interactions outside of The Lir Academy and in keeping with public health guidance.
- If a member of their household is diagnosed with COVID-19 staff are required to inform The Lir Academy immediately and follow the guidelines detailed in Section 5.
- Staff will take personal responsibility for getting acquainted with the new ways of using the building through the intensive inductions and informational material provided by The Lir Academy.
- Staff will be required to follow the rules regarding social distancing where applicable, efficient hand washing and general sanitising.
- Staff who are travelling internationally are expected to follow guidelines from the Irish government in relation to quarantine periods where applicable.

Section Four

Teaching, Rehearsal and Production Protocols

11) General Teaching Protocols

A blended teaching model will be implemented where classes that can be kept online will continue to take place remotely, while classes where in-person teaching is essential will take place adhering to the teaching protocols outlined in this document. The specific activities of each individual class will be addressed in the Risk Assessments to be completed by each tutor.

The following teaching protocols will also be observed:

- The first day of attendance for each class will include an induction session on general COVID-19 protocols and the health and hygiene practices specific to that class.
- Staff and students will be required to use the sanitising stations provided by The Lir Academy to clean their workspace before and after each use.
- The classrooms will be cleaned and sanitised at the end of each day.
- Regular breaks may be incorporated into each class to allow for natural ventilation of the room and handwashing.
- Students and staff are encouraged to wear warm clothes to accommodate regular natural ventilation
- Where props are needed, acting staff is required to liaise with Facilities (facilities@thelir.ie) and request the props they need. A day will be assigned when the relevant students from the acting class can pick up the props from Unit 2.
- Prop storage will be managed by acting staff and the students from the acting class will be in charge of storing and moving their own props to avoid touching points.
- Repeat access to props is discouraged but will be facilitated where absolutely needed.
- The return of props will be arranged in collaboration with Facilities either through the staff or students of each class. Please arrange via email how the props will be returned and what documentation is needed for the return of each prop.

12) Production and Rehearsal Protocols

Mask wearing and sanitisation will continue unless subject to specific derogations

A detailed series of protocols are outlined within the Production and Rehearsal Protocol section of the Appendix – [please click here](#). These cover the periods of Pre-Production, Rehearsal, Build, Tech and Performance. They are broken down into areas of; Rehearsal Room, Rehearsal room management, Costumes and Props in rehearsals and in show, hair & Makeup, Workshop Protocols, the Construction Phase, the Get In, the Tech, Performances, Production Recovery and Student Progression.

These protocols may be referenced for any showing but will be specifically used on all final year productions. All SMTT, Year 3 Acting and MFA students must be familiar with these protocols as well as the directors and designers of the shows

Handling and Responding to a Suspected or Confirmed Case of COVID-19

13) Protocols for a Suspected or Confirmed Case of Infection

These are the steps to be followed if someone is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19. These steps are informed by government and health authorities' regulations and are subject to change. The section will be updated to reflect the latest government advice related to isolation, testing and sanitising.

The Covid-19 Safety Committee will meet bi-weekly to review compliance, revise procedures and hold regular drills should a suspected case occur at The Lir.

Anyone who has flu or flu-like symptoms, displays COVID-19 symptoms, or is a close contact of a confirmed case and unvaccinated against Covid-19 should stay at home, contact their GP and follow the guidelines provided by the HSE.

If an individual displays COVID-19 symptoms on-site, they will be safely escorted to the designated isolation room where they will wear a mask and get in contact with their GP. The room will be ventilated and equipped with sanitary wipes, hand sanitiser and disposal bins. The individual will remain isolated until advised by a medical professional.

- The COVID-19 Manager/response team member will safely assist the suspected case to call the College Health Centre or their GP.
- The COVID-19 Manager/response team member will notify management and arrange transport home or hospital for medical assessment. Public transport will be avoided.
- The isolation area will be closed until appropriately cleaned and sanitised.
- The COVID-19 Safety Committee will meet and carry out an assessment of the incident including the review of the contact tracing associated with the suspected case, which will form part of determining follow-up actions and recovery.
- The close contacts of the suspected case will continue to attend their daily activities only restricting if the suspected case receives a positive result and

following HSE advice. [The HSE will determine next steps based on their vaccination status and if they are not presenting with symptoms².](#)

- If a confirmed case is identified at The Lir Academy, the Covid-19 Safety Committee will work closely with the HSE to implement safety procedures including assistance with contact tracing and advising people who have been in contact with the confirmed case.
- Unvaccinated close contacts of the confirmed case may be required to self-isolate for 14 days from the last time they had contact with the confirmed case and follow the restricted movements guidance on the HSE website. They will only be able to return to The Lir Academy if their 2nd test result is negative.
- [If a staff member or student is fully vaccinated against Covid-19 but is a household close contact, they will need to restrict movements \(stay at home\) until they have 3 negative antigen test results within 5 days. A household close contact is someone who was in close contact with a person who tested positive in a residential setting. For example, a house, flat or apartment³.](#)
- [Non-household](#) vaccinated close contacts without symptoms will unlikely need to restrict but will be required to take rapid antigen tests provided by the HSE⁴.
- Following advice from the HSE, further contact tracing and testing may be conducted with those members of staff and students who may have come in contact with the confirmed case.
- All affected staff and students will be actively followed up by the COVID-19 manager/response team.
- If a student becomes the close contact of a confirmed case from outside The Lir Academy, the student must contact the HSE immediately to obtain further instruction which may require remaining at home or leaving The Lir Academy's premises immediately based on their vaccination status. Staff and students should keep The Lir Academy informed on their medical progress.
- The above eventualities will be recorded by the COVID-19 manager/response team.
- A risk assessment will be carried out by the HSE and Trinity College Dublin on whether The Lir Academy activities continue as normal for those that have not come in contact with the confirmed case.
- A pre-approved communications plan will be put in place to inform all stakeholders of the confirmed case and to manage any media enquiries.
- The contact log system implemented by Trinity College Dublin will help keep a record of the staff and students they come in contact with outside of The Lir Academy and notify them if a COVID-19 case is confirmed.

² Updated 18.11.2021

³ Updated 18.11.2021

⁴ Updated 18.11.2021

14) Protecting Vulnerable Staff / Students

Staff and students who are in at-risk groups (aged over 70, with pre-existing conditions, pregnancy etc.) will be advised to take extra precautions.

- Where possible, their time spent in the building will be reduced
- If working/studying from home is not possible, the safest option will be considered for their on-site roles.
- The vulnerable individual will be consulted in the measures taken for their safety at any time and be part of assessing whether their role presents an acceptable level of risk.

Section 6 - Checklists and Scenarios

15) Checklists

Please find links below to:

- [Return to work form](#)
- [Staff checklist](#)
- [Student checklist](#)
- [Daily symptom checklist](#)

16) Scenario

General Details:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All staff, students and visitors are made aware of the symptoms of COVID-19 via in-house training induction and signage.• Training will be provided to all students to respond to a suspected case of COVID-19.• An isolation room has been identified and is stocked with appropriate PPE.
COVID-19 symptoms:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cough• Fever (high temperature – 38 degrees Celsius or above)• Anosmia – loss or change in your normal sense of smell (it can also affect your sense of taste)
Notify student (patient);	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To maintain physical distance from all staff, students and visitors
Alerting Key Staff:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The student (patient) will contact the Head of Department (HOD also being a Covid-19 Compliance Officer or members of the Covid Response Team via phone.• The Head of Department will contact a member of the Covid-19 Response Team to inform them that a

	<p>student is feeling unwell and displaying recognised symptoms giving your location.</p>
<p>Immediate response at the initial location:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The COVID-19 Compliance Officer to be equipped with a medical face mask and face shield and attend to the student (patient) who will also be given a medical face mask and face shield at the scene. • The COVID-19 Compliance Officer escorts the individual patient to the isolation area/room. • The student (patient) will be advised not to touch any surfaces, objects or people. • All staff, students and visitors will remain at least 2m away from the student (patient).
<p>Key actions by COVID-19 Compliance Officer in isolation area:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With assistance from the COVID-19 Compliance Officer, the student (patient) will contact the college Health Centre or their GP by phone (preferably using their own phone) to discuss the next steps. • Any patient displaying symptoms, staff, students or the public should not use public transport and an alternative method of transport will be organised.
<p>Suspected Covid-19 protocols:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear diagnosis will need to be confirmed • A meeting will be called by the COVID-19 Safety Committee to discuss suspected case and actions needed (sending staff & students home if required etc) • While waiting for test results, the student's (patient) primary and secondary contacts will be identified • Following assessment by the COVID-19 Safety Committee, The Lir Academy may notify all students, staff and visitors in contact with the student (patient) to self-isolate as a preventative measure until the final diagnosis is actually confirmed as positive or if vaccination status is unknown. • This will include the other members of the student's (patient's) own pod, and any individuals who intersected with this pod. • All other staff and students will be asked to remain vigilant to any sign of possible symptoms
<p>Key points and questions to consider in this scenario:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A decision will be taken at this point whether the student's production responsibilities can be assumed by other individuals, pods or Lir Academy tutors.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If responsibilities can be assumed by other individuals, an online briefing of the project with all involved prior to the get-in day so that immediate knowledge of core department aspects is known by any potential deputized member of the department. • If this is not deemed possible, the pod will be replaced by professional crew members, drawn from the talent pool or elsewhere, until the members of the production pod can return safely to the production. • Following a risk assessment carried out by the HSE, anyone who has not been in close contact with a confirmed case may be allowed to continue to work/train as usual. • If a student for whom the production is a module of their course tests positive and is not able to continue in the production, their circumstances will be judged on an individual basis, in consultation with Trinity College. The student might be assessed on their work to date, go “off-books” for a year due to ill health or have other solutions applied to their individual situation. • A pre-approved communications plan will be put in place to inform all stakeholders of the confirmed case and to manage any media enquiries. • The Lir Academy will have contingency plans to ensure that Lir activities can remain functional. • Isolation room will be closed until fully sanitised. • Incident reported to Covid Notify at TCD. • Planning and arrangement with a medical provider service for prompt COVID-19 testing. • The student (patient) will not be permitted to return to college until the HSE determine it is safe to do so.
<p>Follow-up actions:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspect COVID-19 cases to be reported to the COVID-19 Safety Committee. • Incident report to be completed. • Be available to assist with any contact tracing request should a case of COVID-19 be confirmed. • Inform individuals if they have been in close contact with a suspect/confirmed case of COVID-19, in consultation with the HSE. No personal details of the suspect/confirmed case should be shared (GDPR). • Contact details of all those visiting the venue are being recorded to aid contact tracing if necessary.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review and amend The Lir policies accordingly.
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Appendix

Please see all appendices relating to the sections above by clicking [here](#).