

GUIDELINES ON PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 FOR SCHOOLS, TEACHERS, PARENTS AND STUDENTS


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Following a challenging few months, our lives are gradually easing up with a sense of hope and positivity. Schools are scheduled to re-open after a long holiday and kids are eager to get back. Therefore, it's important that we take the best measures to protect our children and educational institutions.

This guideline can help school administrators, teachers and staff, parents, caregivers, community members and children themselves to promote a safe and healthy environment at school, with tips that are beneficial for everyday use.



SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS AND STAFF

The following basic principles can help keep students, teachers and staff safe at school and help stop the spread of this virus.

- Students, teachers and other staff who are sick should not come to school.
- Schools should enforce wearing face masks and regular hand washing with soap and clean water, alcohol rub/hand sanitizer etc. Enforce minimum daily disinfection and cleaning of school surfaces by using a chlorine solution or similar solution.

- Schools should provide water, sanitation and waste management facilities and follow environmentally safe cleaning and decontamination procedures.
- Schools should promote and educate students about the importance of social distancing.

- Monitor school attendance.
- Understand basic information about the Coronavirus, including its symptoms, complications, how it is transmitted and how to prevent transmission of the virus.

CHECKLIST FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS AND STAFF

Item	Remarks
<p>Promote and demonstrate regular hand washing and positive hygiene behaviours and monitor their uptake.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure soap and clean water is available at age-appropriate handwashing stations. Preferably with a touch-free mechanism at all places. • Encourage frequent and thorough washing - at least for 20 seconds. • Face masks should be worn on a regular basis or when stepping out of the house. • Place hand sanitizers in toilets, classrooms, halls and near exits where possible. • Ensure adequate and frequent cleaning of toilets/latrines. 	
<p>Clean and disinfect school buildings, classrooms and especially water and sanitation facilities at least once a day, particularly surfaces that are touched by many people/children (railings, canteen tables, sports equipments, door and window handles, toys, teaching and learning aids etc.).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use sodium hypochlorite at 0.5% (equivalent to 5000ppm) to disinfect surfaces and 70% ethyl alcohol to disinfect small items and ensure appropriate cleaning equipment for relevant staff. 	
<p>Increase airflow and ventilation (open windows, use air conditioning where available, etc.).</p>	
<p>Post signs encouraging good hand and respiratory hygiene practices.</p>	
<p>Ensure that trash is removed daily and is safely disposed of.</p>	

PARENTS, CAREGIVERS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

COVID-19 is a new virus and we are still learning about how it affects children. We know it is possible for people of any age to be infected with the virus. It can be fatal in many cases while so far being mainly among older citizens with pre-existing medical conditions.

Keep children in school when healthy

- If your child isn't displaying any symptoms such as a fever or cough it's best to keep them in school – unless public health advice, official advice or other relevant warning has been issued affecting your child's school.
- Teach them good hand and respiratory hygiene practices for school and elsewhere, like wearing face masks, frequent hand washing, covering nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing into a bent elbow or tissue - then throwing away the tissue into a closed bin, and not touching their face, eyes, mouth or nose if they haven't washed their hands properly.

Washing hands properly



Step 1: Wet hands with clean running water.

Step 2: Apply enough soap to cover wet hands.

Step 3: Scrub all surfaces of the hands – including the back of hands, between the fingers and under the nails for at least 20 seconds.

Step 4: Rinse thoroughly with clean running water.

Step 5: Dry hands with a clean dry cloth, single-use towel or hand dryer if available.

Help children cope with the stress – Children may respond to stress in different ways:

- Sleeping.
- Bedwetting.
- Having pain in the stomach or head.
- Being anxious, withdrawn, angry, clingy or afraid to be left alone.

Respond to children's reactions in a supportive way and explain to them that these are normal reactions to an abnormal situation.

Listen to their concerns and take time to comfort them and give them affection, reassure them that they are safe and praise them frequently.

Create opportunities for children to play and relax. Keep regular routines and schedules as much as possible, especially before they go to sleep, or help create new ones in a new environment.



CHECKLIST FOR PARENTS, CAREGIVERS & COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Item	Remarks
Monitor your child's health and keep them home, if they are ill.	
<p>Teach and model good hygiene practices for your children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash your hands with soap and clean water frequently. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 70% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and clean water if hands are visibly dirty. • Face masks should be worn on a regular basis or when stepping out of the house. • Ensure that clean drinking water is available. • Enforce the cleanliness of toilets/latrines. • Ensure waste is safely collected, stored and disposed of. • Cough and sneeze into a tissue or your bent elbow and avoid touching your face, eyes, mouth and nose. 	
Encourage your children to ask questions and express their feelings with you and their teachers. Remember that your child may have different reactions to stress; be patient and understanding.	
Prevent stigma by using facts and reminding students to be considerate of one another.	
Coordinate with the school to receive information and ask how you can support the school's safety efforts (through parent-teacher committees, etc.).	

STUDENTS AND CHILDREN

Children and young people should understand basic, age-appropriate information about COVID-19; including its symptoms, complications, how it is transmitted and how to prevent transmission.

Stay informed about COVID-19 through reputable sources such as UNICEF, WHO and the Ministry of Health and Epidemiology Unit advisories. Be aware of fake information/myths that may circulate by word-of-mouth or online.



CHECKLIST FOR STUDENTS AND CHILDREN

Item	Remarks
In a situation like this, it is normal to feel sad, worried, confused, scared or angry. Know that you are not alone. Talk to someone you trust, like your parents or teacher, so that you can help keep yourself and your school safe and healthy. Ask questions, educate yourself and seek/obtain information from reliable sources.	
Protect yourself and others. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wash your hands frequently with soap and clean running water for at least 20 seconds.• Wear your face masks regularly.• Remember not to touch your face.• Do not share cups, eating utensils, food or drinks with others.	
Be a leader in keeping yourself, your school, family and community healthy. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share what you learn about preventing diseases with your family and friends, especially with younger brothers and sisters.• Model good practices such as sneezing or coughing into your bent elbow and washing your hands, especially for younger family members.	
Do not stigmatize your peers or tease anyone about being sick; remember that the virus does not follow geographical boundaries, ethnicities, age, ability or gender.	
Tell your parents, another family member, or a caregiver if you feel sick, and ask to stay home.	
Avoid spitting in school premises and generally in public.	



AGE-SPECIFIC HEALTH EDUCATION

Below are suggestions on how to engage students of different ages on preventing and controlling the spread of COVID-19 and other viruses. Activities should be contextualized further based on the specific needs of children (language, ability, gender, etc.).

Preschool	Primary School	Lower/Upper Secondary School
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on good health behaviours, such as wearing face masks, covering coughs and sneezes with a bent elbow and washing hands frequently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure to listen to children's concerns and answer their questions in an age-appropriate manner. Encourage them to express and communicate their feelings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure to listen to students' concerns and answer their questions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sing a song while washing hands to practice the recommended 20 seconds duration. Develop a way to track handwashing and reward for frequent/timely handwashing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasize that children can do a lot to keep themselves and others safe. Introduce the concept of social distancing. Focus on good health behaviours, such as wearing face masks, covering coughs and sneezes with a bent elbow and washing hands properly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasize that students can do a lot to keep themselves and others safe. Introduce the concept of social distancing. Focus on good health behaviours, such as wearing face masks, covering coughs and sneezes with a bent elbow and washing hands properly. Remind students that they can model healthy behaviours for their families.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use puppets or dolls to demonstrate symptoms and how to comfort someone who is sick, cultivating empathy and safe caring behaviours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help children understand the basic concepts of disease prevention and control. Use exercises that demonstrate how germs can spread. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage students to prevent and address stigma. Discuss the different reactions they may experience and explain that these are normal reactions to an abnormal situation. Encourage them to express and communicate their feelings.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have children sit further apart from one another. They should keep enough space so as to not touch their friends. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate why it is important to wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and clean water. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build student societies/clubs and have them promote facts about public health.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have students analyse signs to identify high-risk behaviours and suggest modified behaviours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate relevant health education into other subjects.

Disclaimer: The guidelines outlined in this document are meant to safeguard you and your loved ones from COVID-19. We advise you to seek professional guidance if you wish to clarify any section on this document or if you wish to take any action based on this document.