

SCHOOLS & EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

REOPENING

The purpose of this document is to provide clear and actionable guidance for safe operations through the prevention, early detection and control of COVID-19 in schools and other educational facilities. Maintaining safe school operations or reopening schools after a closure requires many considerations but, if done well, can promote public health. Following basic principles can help keep teachers, students and allied staff (security, administration, food handlers, etc.) safe at school and help stop the spread of this disease.

There must be adequate school resources and infrastructure to maintain COVID-19 prevention and control strategies

Understanding age-related needs and capacities to adapt to changes and provide necessary support

Understanding safety and security implications of re-opening and to address both employee and student vulnerabilities

Recommended Measures for Reopening Schools

Hygiene and environmental measures to limit exposure

- ✎ frequent hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, non-contact greetings
- ✎ use paper towels for drying hands and avoid shared hand towels
- ✎ school policy on wearing a mask or a face covering in line with national guidance
- ✎ daily cleaning (using registered products) of the school and dormitory environments, including ablution facilities and frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, desks, toys, lunch tables, learning aids
- ✎ move classes outdoors where possible and ventilate if the climate allows
- ✎ open windows and doors to improve circulation of outdoor air, where practicable

Screening and management of sick students, teachers and other school staff

- ✎ "stay at home if unwell" policy for teachers, allied staff and students
- ✎ daily screening (e.g. temperature taking) and access control program of teachers, allied staff, students and visitors (e.g. parents, contractors) on arrival
- ✎ COVID-19 self-declaration for entry
- ✎ suspend reward systems for learners for full attendance to discourage sick learners from going to school

Ensure regular, transparent communication with parents and students

- ✎ reinforce that caregivers alert the school and health authorities if someone in their home has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and keep their child at home.
- ✎ include training on the implemented controls, recognizing COVID-19 related symptoms, use, maintenance and disposal of facemasks

Physical distancing at school

- ✎ maintain at least 1.5m between everyone at school through desk spacing, limit mixing of classes, include more teachers, move classes outdoors where possible, no mass gatherings or activities (e.g. sports)
- ✎ maintain physical distancing in dormitories, dining and other common areas
- ✎ modify timetables and stagger breaks and the beginning and end of the day

Tele-schooling and distance learning

- ✎ where possible, initiate or continue tele-schooling using blended methods
- ✎ avoid penalizing students in difficult learning environments

Establish procedures if students or staff become unwell

Plan with local health authorities, school health staff and update emergency contact lists

Implement procedures and capacities to isolate ill students and staff without creating stigma,

Monitor the effects on health and well-being of staff and students

Procedure for contact tracing when a student or staff becomes COVID 19 positive

Support vulnerable populations

- ✎ Assess the vulnerabilities of staff that are older than 60 years
- ✎ Consider staff and students with co-morbidities and plan alternative working arrangements
- ✎ Work with social service systems to ensure continuity of critical services such as health screenings, feeding programs or therapies for children with special needs.
- ✎ Consider the specific needs of children with disabilities and access to hand washing or social distancing measures.
- ✎ Consider how marginalized populations may be more acutely impacted by the illness or its secondary effects.



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