

## **STEP BY STEP GUIDELINES FOR SMT (in managing COVID-19)**

The specific rate of transmission within schools remains unknown but is likely to be a source of transmission in the community; the large degree of mixing and contact among and between children and adults in the traditional school environment presents many challenges to achieving physical distancing

Guidance is required regarding:

- school closures
- implementation of hygiene and physical distancing measures
- managing learners and staff who have had contact with individuals who have suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection or are displaying symptoms of COVID-19

### **1. Hygiene and physical distancing measures to consider for reducing SARSCoV-2 transmission in the school environment**

- Implementation of hygiene standards, coughing and sneezing etiquette and social distancing measures will be imperative
- In the school setting hygiene and physical distancing measures within three major focal points of transmission are highlighted:
  - before school
  - to and from school
  - at school

NB: SMT SHOULD SEND OUT COMMUNICATION TO THIS EFFECT TO STAKEHOLDERS PRIOR TO THE RETURN OF LEARNERS AT SCHOOL.

- **BEFORE GOING TO SCHOOL EACH DAY:**
  - Hygiene – personal responsibility
    - Caregivers to do a ‘physical check-in’ on their children on a daily basis before school to assess for any symptoms of any illness – do not send child to school if ill with any symptoms
    - Caregivers to provide clean cloth mask (mandatory according to regulations)
    - Caregivers to select appropriate transport choices for learners aligned with regulations [see guidance on public transport regarding adequate ventilation, sanitization and reduced capacity in public transport conveyances (bus, train, taxi)]
    - Staff to do a ‘physical check-in’ on themselves on a daily basis before school to assess for any symptoms of any illness – do not attend school if ill with any symptoms
    - If child or caregiver or staff diagnosed with COVID-19, to alert school to allow for contact tracing, and to follow national guidance for self-isolation

- If child or caregiver has been in contact with an individual with a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection, to inform school and to follow national guidance for self-quarantine

- **AT SCHOOL**

- Hygiene - School responsibility
  - Schools to promote daily symptom screening for all learners and staff at home before coming to school
  - Schools can consider use of symptom screening apps to deliver via cellular phone technology to all learners, caregivers and staff on a daily basis
  - Actively encourage disclosure by families and staff with COVID-19 illness to school authorities to permit contact tracing, without fear of stigma or discrimination
- Physical distancing - Personal responsibility:
  - Caregivers to emphasise “no touch” connection with others at home, such as waving, nodding, smiling as forms of greeting and engaging, and to refrain from hugging, kissing, play-wrestling, etc.

- **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

- School responsibility
  - Schools to promote appropriate hygiene measures (sanitizing, cough etiquette) during travel to and from school for all learners and staff
  - Provision of handwashing or hand sanitization points at sites of drop-off and collection
  - Provision of reserve stock of emergency clean cloth masks for learners arriving without masks, or damaged, inappropriate masks etc.
- Schools to promote physical distancing for all learners and staff when arriving and leaving school
- Provide clear demarcations (with tape or barriers) for staggered queuing allowing 2m space between individuals queuing for bus or taxi
- Arrange drop-off and collection times to be staggered for different grades to allow for less crowding during queuing
- Learners and staff to wear clean cloth masks appropriately
- Learners and staff to frequently sanitize personal devices and touch screens in their use
- Schools to promote regular hand-washing for 20 seconds and cough and sneeze etiquette for all learners and staff
- Have a clear plan and protocol to follow should a learner or staff member be at risk of contact with an individual with COVID-19 or develops symptoms at school
- Identify and prepare a dedicated isolation room

- Learners and staff to be encouraged to inform staff if they develop symptoms or have had contact with an individual with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 so that the necessary transfer to the isolation room can begin
- School to follow national guidelines for isolation and quarantine of learners or staff who meet criteria as informed by the local health authorities
- Provision of handwashing or hand sanitization points at easily accessible sites throughout school
- Sanitization to be provided at entrances to class-rooms and any gathering venues
- Training of how to wear a cloth mask appropriately, to only touch the ear-strings, not the mask itself, and how to clean it
- Provision of masks and visors to all teachers and guidance on adequate wearing and cleaning
- Ensure that there are no activities where students are expected to hold hands or walk directly behind each other, or next to each other
- Cleaning staff to regularly clean frequently-used surfaces including door handles, doorknobs, light switches, tables, countertops, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, taps and sinks. (Essentially any surface that people touch regularly)
- Schools to ensure that cleaning staff have adequate cleaning supplies, are adequately trained, have appropriate personal protective equipment
- If isolation room requires cleansing, schools to ensure that appropriate personal protective equipment is available for designated trained cleaning staff
- Schools with limited resources must escalate to District Circuit Manager to ensure adequate water supply and hand-washing facilities as well as provision of sanitizer before learners should be permitted onto school property
- Learners and staff to maintain adequate physical distancing and to follow instructions of teaching staff
- Learners to alert staff if they develop symptoms or have had contact with an individual with confirmed or suspected COVID-19
- Schools to promote physical distancing for all learners and staff in the school and to avoid close contact (no hugging or shaking hands)
- School to actively encourage authentic information and communication regularly regarding COVID-19
- School to discourage all stigma and discrimination regarding COVID-19
- Teachers over the age of 60 and with comorbidities should work from home, or if selecting to work at school, to have no contact with children and minimal contact with other staff during the work day
- Consider staggering classes to reduce size of class
- Limiting classrooms to the number of learners that still permits adequate physical distancing

- Consider use of large venues (e.g. school halls) for teaching in settings where crowded classrooms will not permit adequate physical distancing
- Cancel or postpone any gatherings e.g. assemblies, or prize-giving
- Cancel all sporting and cultural events and regular sports or cultural activities
- Refrain from incentivizing attendance or punishing absenteeism
- Encourage learner leadership to promote health promotion and consider peer-to-peer health promotion activities
- Schools to provide referral for mental health support when necessary due to the high levels of anxiety circulating within the school community regarding COVID-19

**SMT SHOULD:**

- Ensure that classroom and school infrastructure promotes social distancing Ensure social distancing in school offices, staffrooms as well as school entrances by marking off 1.5m distance breaks leading up to the entrance.
  - Mark areas inside and outside the school and ensure compliance by learners and teachers. A zig-zag pattern can accommodate more people into the same length of a queue
  - Staggering the beginning and end of the school day;
  - Cancelling assemblies, sports games and other events that create crowded conditions;
  - Creating space for children’s desks to be at least 1,5 metres apart (see the Department’s guidelines on School Social Distancing), this will reduce the number of learners; and
  - Teaching and modelling the creating of space and avoiding unnecessary touching
  - Schools must identify an isolation room for suspected cases and persons under investigation by the local health authorities.
- Plan nutrition measures and communicate safe transportation
- Re-draft timetables and implementing effective curriculum measures in line with policy so as the maintain or enhance the quality of teaching and learning
  - Use the circular on re-drafting of timetables and base it planning on the trimming of the curriculum.
- Collect PPE’s and overseeing deep cleaning and disinfection of school
- Ensure standards of hygiene and health protocols in compliance with Occupational Health and Safety Regulations
  - Prepare and maintain handwashing stations with soap and water and set up hand washing stations with clear signage and place hand sanitizers in each classroom, at entrances and exits, at the reception/front office, and near lunchrooms and toilets; and
  - Always ensure that the stock of soap and sanitizers are always refreshed and the continuous supply is ensured.
- Communicate with teachers and parents about curriculum and teaching measures
- Communicate with staff that have pre-existing conditions and comorbidities to ensure that you complete the reporting template and plan duties accordingly.
- Ensure that parents fill in the Health Risk questionnaire so that learner safety can be managed efficiently.

- Conduct a risk assessment and based on data received from staff and learners and plan accordingly.
- Availability of Water and Sanitation
  - If insufficient, report to your senior and SGB to make necessary arrangements
- Access control measures
  - Draw these up in line with policy and communicate by putting up information at school entrances and exits.
- Logistics for meetings
  - What platform will you be using? – try to avoid contact sessions, try to make use of online options
- Screening
  - Practice as outlined above
- Managing learners who are unwell
  - Isolate them and notify parents to fetch them and have them tested
- Cross teaching across grades or subjects
  - Finalise the staff available and distribute teaching in a manner that would benefit learners
- Preparing duty lists and communicating it to General Workers
  - clean and disinfect school buildings, classrooms and especially water and sanitation facilities at least, once a day;
  - clean and disinfect surfaces that are touched frequently by many people (railings, lunch tables, sports equipment, door and window handles, toys, teaching and learning aids, etc.) must be cleaned more frequently; and
  - dispose of ordinary waste materials and contaminated waste material regularly.
  - The cleaning and disinfecting of facilities and disposal of waste material should be done in accordance with Circular 6 of 2020 relating to Directives regarding the COVID-19 procedures for cleaning and disinfecting of Education facilities.
- Ensure proper hygiene standards are maintained by communicating with transport providers, scholar transport, patrollers and food handlers
- Implement school absenteeism monitoring systems to track learners and staff absence and compare against usual absenteeism patterns at the school.
- Alert the District about large increases in learner and staff absenteeism due to respiratory illnesses.
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### **SCREENING AND ACCESS CONTROL**

- Limit school entrances and exits to one
- Mark the 1.5 to 2m distance leading up to the entrance
- Set up three stations at the entrance:
  - First station for filling in of the register
  - Second station for filling in the questionnaire and temperature screening (anyone whose temperature reading is above 38, must be turned away)
  - Third station for issuing of PPE and sanitizing
- In the case of learners and teachers, the youth brigade stationed at your school will perform the temperature screening each morning.

- Should a learner be turned away at the gate, s/he must be issued with a letter to that effect from the school or parents should be encouraged to wait for the child to enter the school before driving off.
- Ensure that there is a separate entrance for scholar patrol learners to enter as they will have already been screened before embarking on the bus.

