



A - WCED Guideline: Important information from the Provincial Department of Health

Branch: Institution Development and Coordination	A – WCED Guideline: Important information from the Provincial Department of Health	
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Approved by the Head of Department:



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A – WCED GUIDELINE: IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM THE PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

This is an extract from the Provincial Department of Health Document titled: “Preventing and managing coronavirus infection in the workplace.”

(<https://coronavirus.westerncape.gov.za/frequently-asked-questions/frequently-asked-questions-how-prevent-and-manage-covid-19-infections>)

SCHOOLS

1. Practical steps for preparation of the school, teachers and learners

- Risk assessment of learners and school staff
 - Enlist the support of parents and caregivers to identify learners and school staff who are at increased risk of severe disease (e.g. immunocompromised, chronic illness) and work with them to make arrangements for remote learning where possible.

- Orientate teachers and support staff on the following (at a minimum):
 - How COVID-19 is spread or what the symptoms of COVID-19 are.
 - What measures they must put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
 - How to put on, take off, store and clean a cloth face mask.
 - What to do if they have any symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
 - What to do if they have been diagnosed with COVID-19.
 - What to do if they have come into close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
 - How to wash and sanitise their hands correctly.
 - How to communicate with learners about COVID-19 in an age-appropriate and sensitive manner.

- Educating learners
 - Educate learners on the items listed above.
 - Try to incorporate Coronavirus/infection prevention/healthy habits into the learning material to reiterate the messaging.
 - Use videos, games and songs to best communicate the message to learners.

- Communication with parents/caregivers
 - Strengthen communication channels with parents/caregivers.
 - Ensure that the school has updated contact information (contact numbers and home addresses) for every parent/caregiver. This will be very important if cases are identified at the school and the quarantining of learners is necessary.
 - Ensure that the school has updated information on who is authorised to collect learners from school.
 - Ensure that parents/caregivers are aware of the school's policies and protocols relating to COVID-19.
 - Engage with parents/caregivers who have concerns about the safety of their child.

2. Practical measures to prevent Coronavirus infection at schools

- Staying home when unwell
 - Anyone (teachers, support staff, learners) must stay at home if unwell and contact the provincial COVID-19 hotline on 021 928 4102 for guidance on testing if their symptoms are consistent with COVID-19.
 - The school should strictly enforce rules about learners staying home when they are unwell and communicate this to parents/caregivers.
- Screening teachers and support staff
 - All teachers and support staff must be screened for symptoms of Coronavirus infection daily upon arrival at the school. Where available, a non-contact thermometer (thermal scanner) can be used for temperature checks. A temperature above 38°C could indicate possible Coronavirus infection.
 - Any employee with any of the symptoms consistent with COVID-19 should not be allowed to commence work. They should be provided with a surgical or cloth mask, should wash their hands and should be transported to a Coronavirus testing centre.
- Screening learners
 - Learners should be screened for symptoms of Coronavirus infection daily upon arrival at the school.
 - Each school must decide how best to screen learners within the resources available to them. Schools may make use of an electronic screening tool or a paper-based tool. Screening should be done at the entrance to the school and can be done by a designated teacher/staff member.

- For crèches/younger learners who cannot communicate their symptoms or lack thereof, consider placing a symptom screening sheet in a communication book that is used between the school and parents/caregivers. Ask parents to sign the sheet daily to record whether their child has any of the listed symptoms or not. If a thermometer is available in the home, parents can also check and record their child's temperature daily. As with all objects, handling the book must be minimised and hands must be sanitised after handling.
- Teachers, parents/caregivers and learners must be aware of the procedures that will follow in the event of a learner screening positive i.e. having one of the symptoms suggestive of Coronavirus infection.
- **If a learner has any of the symptoms suggestive of Coronavirus infection:**
 - The learner will not be allowed to enter the school. The learner must be isolated in a designated section of the school/area within a classroom (e.g. sick bay) and provided with a face mask if they do not already have one. The parent/caregiver must be contacted and asked to collect the learner immediately. Only allow a single teacher/staff member to have contact with the learner while waiting for the parent/caregiver.
 - The learner may return to school once they have been assessed by a healthcare professional either in the private sector or at public sector Coronavirus testing centres, if it is determined that they are unlikely to be infected with Coronavirus (proof of assessment may be required).
 - If they are likely to be infected with the Coronavirus and have been tested, then they will need to be isolated at home or at an isolation facility. Should this occur then a mechanism for ongoing learning for the learner should be implemented by the school.
- **If a learner becomes unwell during the course of the school day:**
 - Immediately isolate the learner from others in a designated area (e.g. sick bay) and follow the advice provided above in the case of a learner with a positive symptom screen.
- In the case of a learner that has a positive symptom screen or becomes ill during the course of the day, there is no requirement for people who came in close contact with the learner to quarantine whilst the learner is awaiting their test results.
- Quarantine will only become necessary for close contacts if COVID-19 is confirmed by a positive test.

- Pick-up and drop-off
 - Consider staggering pick-up and drop-off times to limit the number of people (parents and learners) at the school during these times.
 - Instead of allowing parents/caregivers to come into the school building, have each class teacher meet learners at the school entrance at the start of the day and escort them to the exit at pick-up times. Position a staff member at the entrance to coordinate this process and ensure that teachers are fully aware of who is authorised to collect learners.
 - Where possible, grandparents and elderly caregivers should not pick-up or drop-off learners at school because they would be at increased risk for contracting severe disease.

- School transport services
 - School transport vehicles must follow the guidance for public transport services i.e. the number of passengers should not exceed 70% of the vehicle occupancy, passengers must sit as far from each other as possible, all windows must be opened and the vehicle must be cleaned regularly. All passengers must wear cloth face masks for the duration of the trip.
 - As far as possible, the driver should remain in the vehicle during drop-off and pick-up.

- School schedule
 - Teachers should move from class to class for lessons rather than requiring learners to move around the school to different classrooms.

- In the classroom
 - Place a hand sanitiser station at the door of every classroom and ensure that any person entering or leaving the classroom sanitises their hands.
 - Desks should be arranged in rows with the desks facing forwards to minimise learners being in face-to-face contact with each other.
 - There should only be one learner at each desk as far as possible.
 - Learners should sit at the same desk every day.
 - Space desks as far as possible from each other as the room will allow.
 - Open all windows and keep the doors open as far as possible to allow for maximum ventilation.
 - Rearrange lesson plans and activities to minimise the sharing of books/materials and passing items back and forth.
 - Learners should not share items such as pens, rulers, calculators etc.

- School bathroom facilities
 - Place a hand wash/sanitiser station at the entrance to the bathrooms.
 - Limit the number of people in the bathroom at any time and monitor that the number allowed is not being exceeded.
 - Ensure that all bathroom facilities are in working order and expedite repairs.
 - Ensure that bathrooms have water and soap available at all times
 - Hands must be washed with soap and water after using the bathroom.
 - Do not use shared towels in the bathroom, use paper towels that can be disposed of in a sealed bin after use.

- Break time
 - Stagger break times so that fewer learners are on break at a time and to limit the mixing of learners from different classes.
 - Learners should sanitise their hands before leaving the classroom and again upon returning to the classroom.
 - Learners should not sit close to each other in groups. If there are tables at which learners sit during the break times, these tables must be cleaned regularly and between uses.
 - Do not allow learners to play games that require physical contact during the break times.

- School feeding schemes
 - Food preparation must adhere to strict hygiene standards.
 - Staff involved in food preparation must also be screened daily.
 - These staff members must make use of the appropriate safety wear (i.e. gloves, hairnet, apron) when preparing food and adhere to strict handwashing practices.
 - Consider preparing meals that can be eaten from disposable containers.
 - All eating utensils and food containers must be washed thoroughly before and after every use. Consider storing each learner's food container and utensil in a separate labelled bag if possible, so that each learner uses the same items daily.
 - Learners must wash their hands with soap and water at the entrance to the dining area.
 - Rather than handing the food to the learner, consider minimising the touching of hands by placing the food on a table from which the learner can collect it.
 - The dining area must be cleaned before and after every use. This includes all tables, chairs and other surfaces.
 - As far as possible, learners must be seated away from each other (e.g. only occupy alternate seats).

- Learners must wash their hands again with soap and water when exiting the dining area.
- School tuck shops and vendors outside school property
 - School tuck shops and vendors outside the school property should not be opened.
 - Learners should not be allowed to congregate in groups while awaiting collection by parents or transport services.
- Extra-curricular activities including sports
 - Extra-curricular activities and sports as well as any group gathering should be cancelled.
- Cleaning routines
 - Follow the guidance related to cleaning routines, materials and the use of personal protective equipment for cleaning presented above.
 - Ensure that you store cleaning materials e.g. bleach solution out of reach of children. Store in clearly labelled bottles and do not re-use beverage bottles/containers for storage.
- Staff rooms
 - Teachers' break times should be staggered (as with those of the learners) and the number of people in the staff room at any time should be limited.
 - Anyone entering the room should first sanitise their hands.
 - Arrange seating in the staff room to allow for physical distancing as far as possible.
 - Staff should, as far as possible, carry a packed lunch in labelled bags/containers and take these containers home daily to be cleaned.
 - Kitchen appliances which are handled by multiple people e.g. microwaves and kettles should be avoided as far as possible. Where they are used, these appliances must be sanitised after every use.
 - All tables, chairs, counters and other surfaces that come into contact with people should be cleaned regularly.
 - Staff meetings should be kept to a minimum and only key staff members should be present at the meetings.
 - Staff should explore other ways of communicating with each other e.g. mobile chats, emails and tele- or video conferencing.

- Face masks
 - Teachers, support staff and learners must wear cloth face masks.
 - Teachers who have difficulty projecting their voice through the mask may remove the mask when speaking but should wear a face shield/visor and must keep a physical distance from the students.

- Schools with hostels
 - Ensure that learners and staff practice physical distancing at all times.
 - Limit the use of communal areas as far as possible and restrict the number of people allowed in these areas. Place a hand sanitiser station at the entrance of each of these areas.
 - For meal times and dining areas, follow the advice provided above under “School feeding schemes”.
 - Limit the number of people using the bath/shower facilities at any time by using bathroom rosters and cleaning the bathrooms frequently between uses.
 - Do not allow learners to visit each other’s rooms.
 - Designate an isolation room in the case of an ill learner that cannot be immediately collected by parents/caregivers.

- Aftercare facilities
 - Aftercare facilities remain the responsibility of governing bodies.
 - Governing bodies must put measures in place to ensure that learners using aftercare facilities are appropriately protected from the spread of the virus.
 - Ensure that learners wear their masks and observe social distancing.
 - Split aftercare facilities into smaller classes if required.
 - Observe the protocol for feeding if learners are fed at the aftercare facility.

Contact information

