

**COVID – 19 SAFETY
AND PREVENTION
POLICY**



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SCHOOL POLICY

Date:	18 May 2020
Topic:	Covid – 19 Safety and Prevention Policy
Distribution:	Educators, Parents, Learners & Board Members
For Action:	All Staff
Implementation Date:	May 2020
Review Date:	Annually

1. OBJECTIVE

1.1 The aim of this policy is to ensure a safe working environment for all employees and to stop the spread of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) virus. Section 8 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 (OHSA) requires every employer to provide and maintain, as far as reasonably practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risks to the health of its employees. Similarly, the OHSA also imposes a duty on employees to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of their fellow employees.

1.2 Information pertaining to COVID-19 is being provided by various authorities on a regular basis and it is important to ensure that updates are obtained and disseminated through the organisation. Please refrain from forwarding information related to the virus without having checked it with credible sources such as the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD). Spreading unverified information may contribute to unnecessary panic, stigma and discrimination, all of which do not add value at this stage.

1.3 This policy is susceptible to changes with the introduction of additional governmental guidelines and accordingly will be updated if, and when, required.

2. APPLICATION

This policy includes measures being taken to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. You are kindly requested to follow all these requirements to sustain a healthy and safe workplace. It is important that we all respond responsibly and transparently to these health precautions.

3. CONTENT

3.1 How does COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 is most likely to spread when there is close contact (1.5 metres or less) with an infected person. It is likely that the risk increases as the period of exposure to an infected person lengthens. Contaminated droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes are the main means of transmission. There are two main routes by which people can spread COVID-19:

- Infection can be spread to people who are nearby as droplets are inhaled into the lungs.
- It is also possible that someone may become infected by touching a surface, object or the hand of an infected person who has been contaminated and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes.

3.2 Primary symptoms of COVID-19

The following symptoms may develop in the 14 days after exposure to someone who has COVID-19 infection:

- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath/ difficulty in breathing
- Redness of eyes
- Body aches
- Loss of smell
- Loss of taste
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Fatigue
- Weakness
- Tiredness

Infections can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people and those with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease.

3.3 What to do if you develop symptoms

People who contract COVID-19 may take anywhere from one to twenty-one days to develop symptoms. Even if you do not have a history of travel to a COVID-19 affected region or contact with an individual who has contracted the illness, you must still inform your healthcare provider if you present with symptoms of COVID-19.

Hotline for the COVID-19 as per the Department of Health website:

**South African
COVID 19 HOTLINE
08000 29999**

If you present with symptoms of Corona Virus, please call the official COVID 19 HOTLINE before going to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. By calling the hotline, someone will be sent to test you where you are, which will limit the spread of the virus.



Employees should notify the Principal and stay at home if they are sick and have been booked off. All employees should follow the company's sick leave policy in such situations. If the school has reason to suspect that an employee has been infected with COVID-19 or an employee becomes ill at work, the employer/principal will request the employee to leave the workplace and seek medical treatment and/or testing immediately.

3.4 Quarantine and working from home

If an employee has been in close contact with an individual who has since been diagnosed with COVID-19, the employee must immediately inform the Principal and contact the COVID-19 Hotline. Close contact means that the employee was in face-to-face contact (i.e. within 1.5 metres) or in a closed space for more than 15 minutes with a person with COVID-19.

If, after informing the Department of Health, the employee is required to self-quarantine then the following policies will apply:

- If the employee is able to work during this period, then there is no requirement to submit a sick leave or annual leave request. The employee is, however, required to report daily to their Head of Department/principal.
- Should the employee become sick during this period, then normal sick leave policy will apply, if the employee's sick leave entitlement under the section is exhausted, management may make an application for an illness benefit in terms of clause 4 of the Directive issued on 25 March 2020 on the COVID-19 Temporary Employer Relief Scheme under regulation 10(8) of the Regulations promulgated in terms of section 27(2) of the Disaster Management Act.

3.5 Travel

All domestic flight travel is suspended until further notice unless absolutely necessary as determined by the parties concerned. Local school related travel will still be required but must be done in line with current protocols of low contact and high hygiene. In this instance, the school will also be guided by the hosts needs and expectations. All non-essential travel, particularly on public transport, is discouraged.

3.6 Meetings

- Consider whether a face-to-face meeting or event is needed - could it be replaced by a teleconference or any other electronic platform.
- Could the meeting be scaled down so that fewer people attend?
- Ensure that all participants in the meeting have washed their hands for 20 seconds or utilised a hand sanitiser prior to the meeting commencing.

- Ensure that all delegates are seated at least one and a half metre apart.
- The names and contact details of all participants in the meeting should be retained for at least one month. This may be done through the completion of a register and will assist healthcare authorities in tracing those who have been exposed to COVID-19 if a participant does become ill with the virus shortly after the meeting.
- If a participant should contract the virus shortly after the meeting, the school must inform all participants.

3.7 Hygiene in the workplace

- All visitors and employees entering the offices will be requested by the receptionist to wash their hands or utilise a hand sanitiser on entering the premises.
- The school premises will as far as possible be restricted to one entry and one exit.
- Coughs and sneezes must be covered with a tissue; the tissue must be disposed of in the relevant waste bin.
- Frequently touched objects, including workstations and surfaces, will be cleaned and disinfected using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Hands must be washed often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, an alcohol-based hand sanitiser with at least 70% alcohol must be used.
- Handshakes and hugs with any learner, educators or member of staff must be avoided.

3.8 Protocol for Cleaning Personnel

- All surfaces must be cleaned daily with disinfectant cleaner. These includes floors, bathrooms, desks, etc
- Surfaces that are frequently touched, e.g. taps, doorknobs at classrooms and toilets, toilet flush, must be cleaned more regularly
- Collect all the bags with possible contaminated waste from bins in the classrooms and offices. Bags must be tied before disposal.
- Protective gear must be worn at all times.
- Should an educator or learner contract COVID-19, the area occupied by them must be thoroughly deep cleansed and sanitized.

3.9 Protocol for Parents

- Parents are to drop off their children off and leave immediately.
- No parent will be allowed to enter the school without an appointment.
- Appointments to see Educators or the Principal may be made telephonically, via email or WhatsApp.
- Upon entry, every parent will be screened by means of a digital thermometer and will be required to sanitise.
- The wearing of a face mask is mandatory.
- Should any learner have any underlying health issues especially those associated with the symptoms of COVID 19 e.g. asthma, a doctor's note will be required, stating advice for managing the learner – prior to attend school.
- Parents are to keep children at home if they are not well.
- Parents will be required to collect their child/ward immediately from the school should the learner fall ill during the course of the day
- All absenteeism should be followed up with a reason for absence especially in the case of illnesses.

3.10 Protocol for Educators

- Educators are required to complete the FIS COVID-19 risk assessment questionnaire prior to returning to school.
- All educators will be screened by the educator on duty.
- Any educator displaying symptoms of COVID-19, should reported it to the COVID officer immediately, who will advise on further action.
- The wearing of a face mask is mandatory.
- Educators are to ensure desks and chairs in the classroom are arranged in a manner which complies with social distancing.
- A record needs to be kept of the amount of sanitiser in the classroom.
- Educators are to ensure social distancing is maintained during break, in the tuckshop queue, assembly and within the classroom.
- Refrain from hugging and being too close to learners.
- Ensure learners sanitise their own desks and chairs after break.
- The sharing of stationery will not be allowed.
- Educators are to have a clear display of floor plans classroom floor plans indicating spacing for social distancing.

3.11 Protocol for Learners

- Upon entry, every learner will be screened by means of a digital thermometer and will be required to sanitise.

- The wearing of a face mask is mandatory.
- A daily register will be kept with a record of the temperature readings.
- If the temperature exceeds 38 degrees, the learner will be kept separate until a parent/guardian arrives to pick the learner. A doctor's note will be required when the learner returns to school.
- Learners are to maintain social distancing within the classroom, during assembly, breaks and while standing in the tuckshop queue.
- The sharing of lunch and stationery will not be allowed.
- Learners who are asthmatic will be placed in a well-ventilated space in the classroom.

3.13 Risk Reduction Methods for Classrooms

- A register will be kept upon entering the classroom.
- Upon entry to the classroom, each lesson will begin with a brief reminder of health and safety rules to observe at all times, which will be printed and displayed throughout the premises.
- Learners will under no circumstances be allowed to change seats assigned to them and will not be allowed to walk around the classroom.
- No learner will be allowed to remove their protective clothing such as masks from covering their nose and mouth.
- Windows are to be opened to ensure that there is good ventilation.
- Each classroom must have access to:
 - a. A litter bin with lid, lined with a bin liner in which all tissues, paper towels and possible contaminated waste must be discarded
 - b. Paper towels to dry hands or wipe surfaces. Used paper towels must be discarded safely in the litter bin with a lid.
- Face masks (cloth masks) are only effective if used with regular handwashing. Cloth masks are to be washed and ironed daily.
- Supporting material on handwashing will be made visible. Information messages should also include:
 - a. Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.
 - b. Follow good respiratory hygiene: covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when coughing or sneezing, then dispose of the used tissue in a bin with a lid.
 - c. Maintain at least one-and-a-half-meter distance between yourself and others.
- Surfaces that are frequently touched, e.g. the doorknobs, desks, etc. will be cleaned regularly.
- Utensils like pens and pencils must not be shared amongst learners or teachers.
- Coughing (in a bent elbow) and sneezing etiquette (in a tissue) must always be adhered to.

- Social distance of 1.5m must always be observed.

3.14 Risk Reduction Methods for Offices/ Staffrooms

- Teleconference will be used for meetings when able.
- All participants to sit 1.5 meters apart.
- Hygiene practices will be observed at all times as well as to sanitize hands upon entry.
- Masks or protective gear should not be removed.
- Open windows and make sure that there is good ventilation.
- Names of all participants should be recorded.
- If anybody present was previously self-isolated or quarantined all members should be made aware of this.
- Social distance of 1.5m must always be observed to.

3.15 Risk Reduction Methods for Break Time

- Breaks maybe staggered to ensure the implementation of social distancing during breaks.
- Increased monitoring by educators on duty.
- The tuckshop will have multiple access points.
- Sport or group gatherings must be monitored and limited.

3.16 Risk Reduction for Toilets/Bathrooms

A handwashing station, handwashing soap (bar or liquid) or hand sanitizer with at least 70% alcohol base should be within 5m of toilets, for handwashing after using the toilet.

3.17 Learner Transport

- All commuter transport services including passenger bus services, taxi services, and private cars transporting learners to school must adhere to the Regulations issued in terms of Disaster Management Act 2002 (Act no 57 of 2002) and all directives set out in the schedule to address and contain the spread of COVID-19.
- Information of compliance as well as contact details of learner transport must be sent to the school, before the resumption of the term. These should be updated regularly.

3.17 Wearing face masks

The use of face masks covering the mouth and nose is compulsory, when in public, entering any building, premises, work and when utilising public transport. Persons

without a face mask will not be permitted to enter the worksite, as required by Chapter 5(1) and 5(2) of the Risk Adjustment Strategy Regulations (29 April 2020).

3.18 Seminars, Training and Conferences

No employee may attend external seminars, training or conferences, unless approved by the Principal. The presentation of seminars and training to clients will be converted to online/blended facilitation.

3.19 COVID-19 Manager

A COVID-19 Manager will be appointed to ensure the implementation of and adherence to Standard Operating Procedures for the risk mitigation of COVID-19 in the workplace, as required by Government Notice NO. 479 29 APRIL 2020 - 479 Disaster Management Act (57/2002): Covid-19 Occupational Health and Safety Measures in Workplaces Covid-19 (C19 OHS), 2020 and the Risk Adjustment Strategy Regulations of 29 April 2020. It is recommended that a COVID-19 Response Team is also appointed to assist, where necessary, with the implementation of and adherence to Standard Operating Procedures for the risk mitigation of COVID-19 in the workplace.

The COVID-19 Manager is further required to develop a plan for the phased in return of employees to the school prior to reopening. The plan must include the following:

- Which employees are permitted to work;
- What the plans for the phased-in return of their employees to the workplace are
- What health protocols are in place to protect employees from COVID-19; and
- The details of the COVID-19 Compliance Officer;

3.12 Protocol for Secretary and COVID Manager

- To ensure that educators and learners adhere to the COVID-19 processes and procedures.
- To monitor and isolate, if necessary, staff members or learners who display high temperatures or any other symptoms of COVID-19.
- Keep parents, educators, learners and staff informed regarding COVID-19
- To adhere strictly to the COVID-19 regularities assigned by GDE.

3.21 Consequence of breach

If an employee breaches this policy the necessary disciplinary action will be taken. It is important to note that the company's sick leave policy will not be adjusted or become flexible during the outbreak of COVID-19. The normal sick leave policy which is in line with Labour Law will still apply. It is the employee's responsibility to contact management should he/she have any queries related to this Policy.