



Pro-Ed Akademie

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PRO-ED ACADEMY GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR SCHOOLS TO RE-OPEN IN A COVID-19 SAFE MODE

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1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has been declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) and the virus has now spread to many countries and territories. While a lot is still unknown about the virus that causes COVID-19, we do know that it is transmitted through direct contact with respiratory droplets of an infected person (generated through coughing and sneezing). Individuals can also be infected from touching surfaces contaminated with the virus and touching their face (e.g., eyes, nose, mouth). While COVID-19 continues to spread it is important that communities take action to prevent further transmission, reduce the impact of the outbreak and support control measures. The protection of students and educational facilities is particularly important. Precautions are necessary to prevent the potential spread of COVID-19 in school settings. However, care must also be taken to avoid stigmatizing students and staff who may have been exposed to the virus.

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 our member schools. In addition, these guidelines provide recommendations for the essential cleaning and use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) based on the risk of exposure of schools to COVID-19.

Guidance in drafting this document was obtained through suggestions of the WHO, medical doctors, occupational health specialists from major Namibian mining houses, various school management teams, legal practitioners and our examining bodies. Apart from ensuring student safety, we recognize that through education of and healthy practices, students of our schools can become advocates for COVID-19 and disease prevention and control at their homes and in their community.

Maintaining safe school operations or reopening schools after the mandatory closure requires many considerations but, if done well, can promote public health in Namibia. Education of the youth can continue in Namibia, which was indicated to be the most low-risk population, according to international statistics. This document should ensure the safest possible environment to this group of the population who are our future.

2 PRINCIPLES OF INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL

A safe environment can be achieved through elimination of infectious particles in the air and on surfaces by **adhering to the Golden Rules:**

1. **Prevent direct contact with sick persons.** Educators and learners are requested to only attend school if healthy. Kindly follow the ***Guidelines for the containment / management of COVID-19 for childcare facilities, schools and school communities*** in this regard.
2. **Control measures** include personal protective equipment (PPE) and risk reduction methods as discussed below, e.g. cleaning surfaces with disinfectant to kill the virus.
3. Maintain a minimum distance of 1.5m between persons at all times.



4. Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds, or use alcohol-based hand sanitiser after contact with any person or after contact with frequently touched surfaces i.e. phones, door handles etc.
5. Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, or nose with unwashed hands.
6. **Airborne transmission** should be limited by proper ventilation in classrooms.
7. Cough in the fold of a bent elbow and sneeze in a tissue which you discard afterwards. Then wash your hands.
8. Surfaces that are frequently touched, e.g. toilet door handles, etc., should be cleaned with diluted bleach disinfectant (20ml bleach per litre water) hourly, or less frequently, depending on the situation.
9. Avoid crowded places.
10. Comply with the National Lockdown rules.

3. RISK REDUCTION METHODS FOR SCHOOLS

- Each person (parent, teacher, learner or visitor) who enters or leaves a school building, must **wash or sanitise their hands** at the entrance/gate utilizing hand hygiene stations, equipped with soap (bar or liquid) and water, or sanitise (with 70% alcohol-based liquid).
- **Take the temperature** of each person (parent, teacher, learner or visitor) on entering a school building with a digital thermometer scanner as follows:
 - Remove the protective scanner cap.
 - Switch it on and wait for a '00' reading.
 - Scan the forehead.
 - A reading of 37.5 and above indicates possible fever.
 - Visitors and staff with a fever are not allowed on the school grounds.
 - Learners with a fever must be kept separate from others until they return home. Parents / caregivers should be contacted without hesitation.
- **The installation, supervision, and regular refilling of stock / equipment** is the responsibility of the principal, delegated to the janitor / cleaners.
- **School management must ensure:**
 - the rapid procurement / delivery of adequate quantities of products in the ***Basic and Essential Sanitation and Hygiene Package for Each School*** by ordering and filling up on stock in a timely manner.
 - that learners are constantly reminded of hygiene routines.
 - regular communication with parents about the importance of hand hygiene in preventing the spread of the COVID-19 virus.
 - **face masks** (cloth masks) and / or visors are available.
- **Informative material on handwashing must be available, providing instructions to:**
 - avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.
 - 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.
 - maintain at least 1.5m distance between yourself and others.

4. ADDITIONAL STEPS TO PROTECT STAFF AND LEARNERS AT SCHOOL

- Staff and learners will be expected to **sanitise their personal spaces constantly**.
- **No group gatherings** like sports gatherings and assemblies will be held at school.
- **Social distancing** will be maintained at all times i.e. no hugging and handshakes will be allowed.
- School will **start and end at different times** for the different grades. The school day will be extended to accommodate the different times for different grades.
- Any teacher or learner who **feels unwell, HAS** to stay at home, inform the school and arrange to be tested immediately.
- Regular information sessions will be held to rule out any stigmatisation.
- **Personal hygiene:**
Each learner will be expected to have his / her personal bottle of disinfectant to use before and after every lesson.
- **Break times:**
 - Specific areas will be allocated to different grade groups to ensure that social distancing can be maintained.
- **Tuck Shop:**
 - The Tuck Shop will be open during breaks. Learners will line up next to the building, maintaining the minimum 1.5m social distance guideline.
- **Arrival at school in the morning:**
 - To prevent crowding at the entrance gate, the following rules will apply:
 - Lines, 1.5m apart, will be drawn outside the gate, where learners will line up in single file.
 - At the gate, learners will have to answer some questions pertinent to their health status, their temperature will be measured and they will be allowed to enter, should they be wearing the official mask.
 - Please urge all learners to abide by these rules.
- **Identifying high-risk learners. High risk learners are those with:**
 - diagnosed medical conditions such as diabetes;
 - respiratory conditions such as asthma;
 - high blood pressure;
 - heart disease; and / or
 - cancer and other low immune-related diseases.
 - It is vital that such learners should not be in contact with other learners. Should a child suffer from any of the above, school management must be informed immediately. The school will make alternative arrangements to ensure that such children still receive quality education.

5. PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW IF SOMEONE IS ILL:

- Anybody **who falls ill** at school or come to school being ill will be sent home immediately.
- **Sick persons will be moved** to an isolated area until they leave for home.



- Bear in mind that it is **NOT a school's responsibility** to identify COVID-19 cases. Also remember that most respiratory diseases are not COVID-19- related.
- **Maintain open communication between home, school and the community.**
 - Anyone who contracts the disease, is legally obliged to inform both the school and the Ministry of Health and Social Services. Parents' co-operation in this regard is vital in order to protect the community.
 - Staff and parents are responsible to answer all enquiries as detailed as possible.
 - Any new information received by a school will be shared without hesitation.

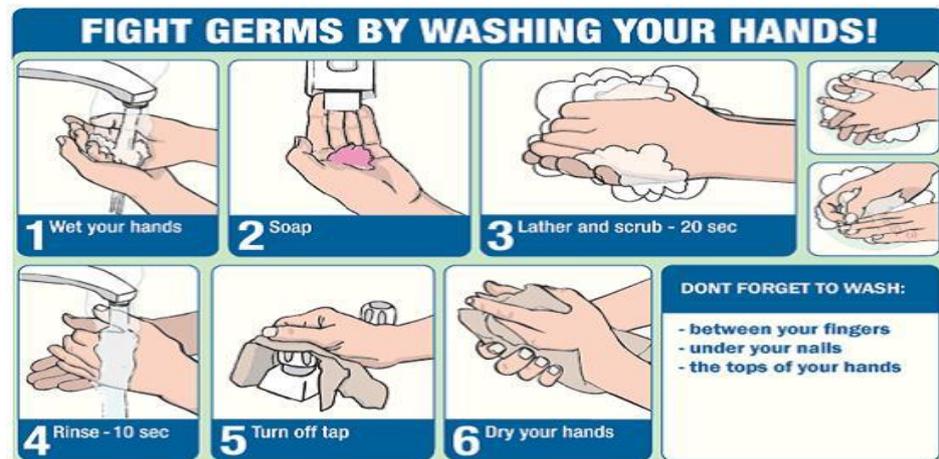
6. HEALTH AND HYGIENE TRAINING:

- Parents, teachers and learners will be trained regarding the hygiene regime to be adhered to.
- Mentors will be available to lend emotional support with regards to fears, anxiety and insecurities.
- Training will be age and gender-specific.

7. SPECIFIC RISK REDUCTION STRATEGIES FOR HIGH RISK AREAS

I CLASSROOMS / OFFICES

- **Each classroom / office must have access to:**
 - **a portable handwashing station as well as** hand soap (bar or liquid) or hand sanitizer with at least 70 % alcohol base.
 - **a dustbin** with lid, lined with a bin liner in which all tissues, paper towels and possible contaminated waste must be discarded.
 - **paper towels** to dry hands or wipe surfaces, should be available.
 - **Used towels** should be discarded in a dustbin with a lid.
- **Hand Hygiene Procedures:**
Frequent washing of hands and general hygiene must be part of everyday life in schools. Every person who enters a classroom must wash their hands with soap (bar or liquid) and water or sanitise their hands (with at least 70% alcohol base) and do so again when leaving the classroom.



- Surfaces that are frequently touched, e.g. doorknobs, must be cleaned hourly with a mixture of 20ml bleach per litre water, or disinfectant wipes.
- Utensils like pens and pencils must not be shared.
- Classrooms must be well ventilated. Coughing (in the bent elbow) and sneezing etiquette (in a tissue) must be adhered to.
- Social distance of 1.5m must be adhered to at all times.
- Classrooms must be cleaned with disinfectant at least twice daily.

II TOILET / BATHROOM

- A **fixed handwashing station**, hand soap (bar or liquid) or hand sanitizer with at least 70% alcohol base should be available within 5m of toilets, to wash hands after using the toilet.
- **Disinfectant cleaner** (recommended: sodium hypochlorite 0.5% (biocide sachets) **or** a bleach mixture of 250ml of bleach to 5 litres of water) must be utilised for daily cleaning of surfaces in toilets which are regularly touched.
- **Surfaces that are regularly touched**, e.g. taps, doorknobs and toilet handles must be wiped down hourly with 20ml bleach per litre water or disinfectant wipes.

III FOOD PREPARATION AREAS (CAFETERIAS AND KITCHENS)

- Food handlers and kitchen staff must wash their hands thoroughly before preparing food. Head gear, face masks and disposable plastic aprons must be worn to prevent droplet transmission.
- All surfaces must be cleaned daily with disinfectant cleaner (recommended: sodium hypochlorite 0.5% (biocide sachets) **or** a bleach mixture of 250ml of bleach to 5 litres of water).
- Surfaces must be cleaned with at least 70% ethyl alcohol-based cleaner for wiping down in between daily cleaning.

IV LEARNER TRANSPORT

Bus transport:

1. Buses will be disinfected before and after every trip.
2. Learners will be expected to disinfect their hands before boarding the bus.
3. No bus will be filled to more than 70% capacity.
4. Routes as well as times will be adjusted to ensure 70% capacity is not exceeded.
5. Wearing masks in buses is mandatory.

8. DAILY DUTIES OF CLEANERS AND THE ALLOCATION AND CORRECT USE OF PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

I Daily duties of cleaners include:

1. Cleaning all surfaces e.g. floors, bathrooms desks daily with disinfectant cleaner (recommended: sodium hypochlorite 0.5% biocide sachets) **or** a bleach mixture of 250ml of bleach to 5 litres of water).
2. Clean surfaces that are frequently touched, e.g. taps, doorknobs at classrooms and toilets, toilet flush, etc. hourly with 20ml bleach per litre water.
3. Collect all bags with possible contaminated waste from classrooms and offices. Tie bags and put them into bigger refuse bags. Tie these refuse bags as well.
4. Wear protective gear as discussed below.

II Personal protective equipment (PPE) for cleaning:

PPE usage is based on the risk assessment of each situation. It is **ONLY necessary for staff who are exposed to COVID-19 infected individuals or whose occupation poses a risk of infection with COVID-19**. PPE is classified into categories: **eye and face protection** (goggles, visor, plastic shields), **hand protection** (various types of gloves), **body protection** (aprons, coats) and **respiratory protection** (depending on risk – various types of masks). All education officials and visitors must adhere to The Golden Rules of Hygiene as discussed above.

In addition, it is recommended that cleaners should have access to

- heavy duty gloves
- face masks
- disposable plastic aprons
- protective eye gear
- closed shoes

III Correct use, necessary hygiene practices and proper disposal of PPE is important to avoid cross contamination from PPE to the users' hands or clothes. Cleaners should perform hand hygiene using the proper techniques before putting on protective gear for cleaning and after removing it, when changing gloves or after any contact with waste material.

- **The procedure to put on protective gear:**

1. Wash hands with soap and water
2. Put on the plastic apron
3. Put on the face mask
4. Put on the eye protection
5. Put on the gloves

- **The procedure to remove protective gear:**
 1. Wash gloves with disinfectant and dry with a paper towel. Dispose of the paper towel in a bin.
 2. Remove gloves and put on a disinfected surface.
 3. Remove eye protection.
 4. Remove plastic apron and place in a lined bin.
 5. Remove face mask and place in a lined bin with a lid.
 6. Wash hands with soap and water.

- **How to put on, use, remove and dispose of a mask**

Note: Masks are only effective when used in combination with the other Golden Rules of prevention listed above. Cloth masks need to be washed with warm soapy water and sundried and/or ironed.

 1. Before touching the mask, clean hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitiser or soap and water.
 2. Inspect mask for tears or holes.
 3. The top is where the metal strip is.
 4. Ensure the coloured side of the mask faces outwards.
 5. Put the mask on. Pinch the metal strip or stiff edge of the mask so it moulds to the shape of your nose.
 6. Pull down the mask's bottom so it covers your mouth and chin.
 7. After use, remove the mask by removing the elastic loops from behind the ears while keeping the mask away from your face and clothes in order to avoid touching potentially contaminated surfaces of the mask.
 8. Discard the mask in a closed bin immediately after use.
 9. Perform hand hygiene after touching or discarding the mask
 - Use alcohol-based hand sanitiser or wash your hands with soap and water.

9. STRATEGY FOR SCHOOLS IN THE CASE OF AN OUTBREAK:

- Communication between school and home will be immediate.
- Those involved will be tested without hesitation.
- The afflicted or those suspected thereof will be expected to self-isolate for two weeks.
- They will be expected to provide a list of all whom they were in contact with before they fell ill.
- Inform neighbours.
- The schools will make the numbers of relevant authorities, hospitals and departments available.
- School management will be obliged to close their schools in the event of an outbreak. That can only be sanctioned by the relevant authorities (MoHSS), who should be immediately informed.

10. CONCLUSION

As schools are to re-open systematically within the next weeks, it is vital for sustainable procedures, as indicated to be put into place. This is to ensure the safety of Swakopmund and the wider coastal community we as Pro-Ed Academy serve, as well as our learners, in order to complete 2020 without any further interruptions. All parents, staff members and learners have a social responsibility towards one another in order to protect our respective communities.