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Royal Government of Bhutan
Ministry of Education



— Rethinking Education —

MINISTER

Ref No.: MoE/33/DT/2020/ 523

Dated: 12th March 2020

Dasho Dzungda/Thrompoen,
Dzongkhag/Thromde Administration,
All Dzongkhags/Thromdes.

Subject: Advisory Note

Dear Dashos,

With confirmation of the first case of COVID-19 in Bhutan, all Schools, ECCD, NFE/CLC and Youth Centres under Paro, Punakha, Thimphu Dzongkhags and Thimphu Thromde have been closed for two weeks starting from 06.03.2020. On the following day, the same instruction was given to Phuentsholing Thromde, Wangduephodrang Dzongkhag and Chhukha Dzongkhag (Chumithang MSS) for the closure of schools, ECCD, Youth and NFE centres. Therefore, in the wake of the situation, all the schools, ECCD, NFE/CLC and Youth Centres in the rest of the Dzongkhags and Thromdes are requested to stay alert and take preventative measures. This is in reference to press release from Prime Minister Office on the first confirmed case on COVID-19 and continuation to the advisory note sent to all Schools, ECCD, NFE/CLC and Youth centres vide reference number DSE/SPCD/DMU(5.8)/2020/3478 dated 4th February, 2020.

To this effect, Ministry of Education would like to request Dashos to kindly instruct Chief DEOs/TEOs to disseminate the following information to the Schools, ECCD, NFE/CLC and Youth Centres:

1. All Schools, ECCD, NFE/CLC, and Youth Centres under those identified Dzongkhags and Thromdes to remain closed as directed by the government.
2. In the closed schools, retain all boarding students in the hostel, unless parents come to take them home.
3. Closely monitor and keep track of the health and wellbeing of students in the schools. In addition, Class Teachers and Health Coordinators must provide special attention to students in lower primary classes.
4. All staff in the schools, NFE/CLC, ECCD and Youth Centres shall remain in station to provide support whenever necessary.
5. Schools must ensure to provide access to counseling services if required.
6. In case of schools without counselors, Chief DEOs/TEOs may mobilize counselors from the nearby school, if school requires psychosocial support.
7. Dzongkhags/Thromdes must identify a Dzongkhag Focal Counsellor to make reporting and referral systematic for all the Psychosocial support and interventions carried out by school counselors. (Individual Counsellors to make referrals and submit their reports using standard referral and reporting protocols of the School Guidance and Counselling Program to the



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- Dzongkhag Focal Counsellor. The Dzongkhag Focal Counsellor must submit the report to the CECD for further submission to the Education Emergency Operation Centre Team).
8. A facebook page "Sherig Counseling Services" is created for students and staff to avail online counseling services (This may be applicable to schools unable to get access to the counsellors).
 9. Schools must sanitize facilities and infrastructure as a preventive measure.
 10. Schools, ECCD, NFE/CLC and Youth Centres must refer the children/learners with flu like symptoms and initiate immediate treatment/referral in consultation with Chief DEOs/TEOs and Health Officials.
 11. Any School Authority if approached by Prime Minister Office requesting for any kind of support to mitigate the emergency, kindly comply unconditionally.
 12. All staff to attend phone calls at all times.
 13. All school buses and utility vehicles to be kept on standby for emergencies.
 14. Schools/Dzongkhags/Thromdes to share all existing Contingency Plans, Directives and Advisory Notes with Information and communication Unit, MoE.
 15. Schools/ECCD/NFE/CLC/Youth Centres to follow only notification and messages issued from the Office of Hon'ble Prime Minister, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and not from other sources.
 16. Upon the closure of the schools and ECCD Centres, students and parents to be briefed on the safety procedures. Schools and ECCD must report the number of students and children upon the closure and opening of the Schools and Centers.
 17. All school activities are to be carried out as normal, except mass gathering may be avoided.

Furthermore, the information on the following preventive measures could also be disseminated to the schools as shared by World Health Organization:

1. Wash your hands frequently: Washing your hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub kills viruses that may be on your hands.
2. Maintain social distancing: Maintain at least 1 metre (3 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
3. Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.
4. If you have any mild respiratory symptoms, you should take rest until you have recovered.

In case of any emergency in the schools, ECCD, NFE/CLC and youth centers, kindly contact the following Officials at the Ministry of Education:

1. Core Task Group (CTG) Desk Leaders:

- i. Mr. Karma Tshering, Offtg. Secretary (DG, DSE) - Chair (17602622)
- ii. Ms. Kesang Choden Dorji, DG, DAHE - Operation and Logistic Desk (17614655),
- iii. Mr. Gholing Tshering, DG, DYS – Immediate Restoration of Essential Public Services Desk (17621910),

Post Box No. 112, Kawajangsa, Thimphu, Bhutan, Tel: PA: +975 2 325431/323825, www.education.gov.bt



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- iv. Mr. Kinley Gyeltshen, Director, DoS - Finance, Information, Communication and Transportation Desk (17709774).

2. Education Emergency Operation Centre (EEOC) team:

- i. Mr. Pem Tshering, Chief NFCED (Lead) – 17646722
- ii. Mr. Karma Wangchuk, Chief SHND - 17632271
- iii. Mr. Tsheyang Tshomo, Chief ICTD - 17989009
- iv. Ms. Reena Thapa, Chief CECD – 17515323/77765323
- v. Ms. Namgay Wangmo, Assistant Programme Officer, SPCD – 17345415
- vi. Ms. Leki Choden, Assistant Information and Media Officer, ICTD-17574818

Yours Sincerely,

(JB Rai)

Copy to:

1. Officiating Secretary, Ministry of Education for kind information.
2. All Department Heads (Department of Adult and Higher Education, Directorate of Services, Department of Youth and Sports) for kind information and necessary action.
3. Director General, REC Paro for information.
4. Director, BCSEA, Thimphu for information.
5. Chief Dzongkhag/Thromde Education Officers for necessary actions.
6. Office copy.