

Guidelines for Reopening of Schools/Centres

Introduction

Enabling environment for the students/learners is one of the prerequisites for re-opening school and Non-Formal Education (NFE) centres which will ensure effective engagement, health, safety and psychosocial wellbeing of students, learners, education faculty and parents for their safe operation.

Teachers, instructors, parents and caregivers have crucial role to play in creating a safe environment whether at school, centres or at homes and equal part must be played by the students and learners.

Providing a platform to encourage students and learners to share their issues and concerns and implement correct and timely interventions enables them to be healthy learners.

The schools and centres shall open by following the health, safety and psychological protocol put in place for COVID-19 prevention and control measures.

1. Before reopening of the school

Schools and Centres should have a comprehensive plan which would include the following:

(a) Safety wellbeing

- vacate, clean and disinfect the school and centre if used as quarantine or temporary accommodation of people.
- collect or update emergency contact lists for all the staff and students.
- identify a sick room to temporarily separate staff and students who may be unwell.
- mark routes for at all locations including classroom, dining hall, hostel, MPH, library, laboratory, exit and entry points. Display QR code to facilitate contact tracing at all entry points.
- clean and disinfect buildings, classrooms and toilets daily, particularly surfaces that are frequently touched by many people (desks, railings, tables, sports equipment, doorknobs, window handles, teaching and learning materials etc.)
- maintain at least one-meter physical distance during any activities.
- avoid events that need gathering of large number of students/learners/teachers to reduce face-to-face interaction such as assembly, prayers, fete, concerts, picnic, competition, farewells, etc.
- monitor student/learner absenteeism and get updated information daily by class teacher or COVID focal teachers.
- instruct students, learners and staff to use face mask and keep at least one spare for emergency use.
- check ventilation for air circulation by opening windows, doors, use fans, air conditioning where available, etc.
- post signs encouraging good hand and respiratory hygiene practices.
- dispose trash daily and safely.
- adhere to safety protocols regarding food and drinks.
- instruct parents to escort their children safely to school and home.
- discourage outsiders visiting school/centre campus. They may be permitted to visit for genuine reasons but with permission from school/centre authority.
- all visitors use Druk Trace app or manual registration mandatorily.

Guideline for reopening of schools/centre

- all students, NFE learners, staff and visitors should undergo thermal screening at the school and centre entry gate.
- do not initiate to conduct any rapid check. This creates unnecessary panic and stigmatization.
- staff returning from frontline duty and students coming from cordyceps collection shall be taken care by following the current protocols at Point of Entry by ministry of Health safety protocols.
- plan and prepare for staggered reporting to school/centre and dispersing of the students/learners, intervals, lunch, library, cafeteria, etc., to avoid crowding (annexure 1).
- communicate to staff, parents and students/learners on safety protocols and procedures.
- conduct Parent Teacher Meetings/Centre Management Committee (in small groups) few days before children/learners resume schools/centres for the following:
 - to inform and seek support on the smooth functioning of schools/centres.
 - to make parents aware of the need to monitor their children's/learners' health and hygiene and report to school/centre of any illnesses in their child.
 - discuss any other issues of concerns.
- brief students/learners and parents on the new norms before the start of actual classes. The following should be disseminated:
 - A session on risk communication and preventive measures using reliable resources from WHO, UNICEF and Ministry of Health.
 - A briefing and taking on a tour around the school to familiarize with hand washing stations, routes, entry and exits points.
 - Students/learners should be encouraged to come to school/centre right on staggered time and leave directly home as soon as classes are over.
 - Encourage students/learners and staff to distance themselves from outsiders.
 - Make everyone aware of the counselling and mental health response services.
- monitor implementation of the guidelines by teachers/instructors and students.
- schools should issue office orders or guidelines based on the guidelines issued by MoE.
- MoH should send office order to all health service providers to periodically carry out joint monitoring and supervision of the schools and NFE centres to ensure that the WASH facilities are in place and used effectively.

(b) Health wellbeing

- make available adequate and functional hand washing stations at strategic locations.
- provide continuous supply of water and soap in washing stations and toilets.
- maintain proper sanitation and hygiene of toilets.
- designate at least two dedicated COVID-19 Safety Focal teachers(preferably School Health Coordinator/De-suung/Counsellor) trained by the health officials.
- train all staff on COVID-19 safety protocols and handling the situation.
- establish and disseminate mechanisms or rapid communication protocol with health centers.
- practice frequent hand washing following handwashing steps (annexure 2) and cough etiquette diligently.
- remind students/learners daily on hand hygiene, cough etiquette, physical distancing and reporting of any illnesses.

- develop a plan to provide special care and monitor health of vulnerable students/learners.
- provide balanced nutritional diet in line with nutritional guideline (Annexure 2).
- use soap and normal detergent with water to clean and disinfect the surface.

(c) Psychosocial wellbeing

- identify a counselling room to provide counselling and psychosocial support services.
- address mental health and psychosocial support needs in close coordination with counsellors/health sector.
- talk about issues and challenges to a counsellor/teachers/parents/health official.

2. Students/learners

Students/learners should

(a) Safety wellbeing

- ask questions, educate and get information from reliable sources.
- keep a distance of at least 1 meter away from others wherever possible.
- not hug and shake hands.
- not share cups, plates, face masks, textbooks, notebooks, pens, rulers, erasers, food or drinks with others.
- practise good habit of sneezing or coughing into elbow or handkerchief and washing hands regularly. If paper towels are used, immediately dispose in waste bin.
- not spit and blow nose in open and public spaces.
- not visit crowded places, large gatherings, quarantine centres, etc.
- always use face mask at school, classrooms, play fields, large gathering, quarantine centres, and while travelling.
- share what they have learnt about preventing disease with their family and friends, especially with younger children and siblings.

(b) Health wellbeing

- wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds following handwashing steps.
- avoid touching eyes, mouth, face with unwashed hands.
- inform the school, centre, parents or caregiver if you feel sick, and stay home.

(c) Psychosocial wellbeing

- not stigmatize or discriminate peers or tease anyone about being sick; remember that the virus can affect anyone.
- talk to someone they trust, like Counsellor/parent/teacher if they are worried, confused, scared or angry.

3. Dzongkhag/Thromde

Dzongkhag/Thromde should

(a) Administrative and Financial Support

- monitor implementation of the guidelines.
- mobilize transportation, counsellors wherever necessary.
- plan and implement for financial assistance to schools/centres.

(b) Safety wellbeing

- liaise with health sector for preventive and safety measures.

(c) Health wellbeing

- consistently monitor WASH facilities.
- coordinate supplies of soaps, disinfectants, etc., to schools/centres.

(d) Psychosocial wellbeing

- support counsellor mobilization according to Dzongkhag/Thromde contingency plan.

4. Parents

Parents should

(a) Safety wellbeing

- model good practices of handwashing following handwashing steps especially before and after eating; after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom/toilets and whenever your hands are visibly dirty.
- provide help, or services to ensure children are safely escorted to and fro from schools.

(b) Health wellbeing

- understand, recognise and share basic information about coronavirus disease (COVID-19), including its symptoms (coughing, fever, shortness of breath), complications, how it is transmitted and how to prevent transmission.
- stay informed about COVID-19 through reliable sources such as WHO, UNICEF and Ministry of Health advisories.
- notify the school management if the child is sick.
- seek medical advice by first calling health helplines (112) or COVID-hotline (2121).

(c) Psychosocial wellbeing

- identify psychosocial issues, challenges and refer to counsellors/mental health experts.

5. Procedures if students/learners or staff become unwell

1. Students/learners and staff must stay home or isolate from others if they are sick without creating stigma.
2. Share to someone they trust, like Counsellor/parent/teacher if they are experiencing any strong negative emotions.
3. Inform parents and seek medical advice by first calling health helplines (112) or COVID-hotline (2121).
4. Refer students/learners/staff directly to a health facility, depending on the situation/context, or send home.
5. Dismiss or cancel classes if the school/learners have a suspected case to contain further spread of virus.

6. After dismissal of class/lock down/closure of school/centre

- Students/learners and staff must stay home or isolate themselves until recovered.

Guideline for reopening of schools/centre

- Clean and disinfect buildings, classrooms and toilets, particularly surfaces that are frequently touched by many people (desks, railings, tables, sports equipment, doorknobs, window handles, teaching and learning materials etc.)
- Assist in identifying people who might have been exposed (contact tracing).
- Maintain confidentiality of the student/learners or staff member suspected or tested positive.
- Lock down the whole campus based on the advice of the health officials.
- Consider compulsory medical leave for the staff and students if suspected or tested positive.
- Avail online counselling services through Sherig Counselling Services

Annexure 1: Suggestive Schedule for Staggered Class and Recess

Grade	Reporting	1 st & 2 nd Periods	Interval	3 rd & 4 th Periods	Lunch	5 th & 6 th Periods	Disperse
X (A, B, C, D)	8:00 am	8:20 am	10:00 am	11:00 am	12:40 pm	1:40 pm	2:40 pm
X (E, F, G, H)	8:20 am	8:40 am	10:20 am	11:20 am	1:00pm	2:00 pm	3:00 pm
XII (A, B, C, D)	8:40 am	9:00 am	10:40 am	11:40 am	1:20 pm	2:20 pm	3:20 pm
XII (E, F, G, H)	9:00 am	9:20 am	11:00 am	12:00 am	1:40 pm	2:40 pm	3:40 pm

Note:

*No bell timing as class reporting and dispersing is staggered.

**Timetable should have same number of periods but with different timings.

***Schools may follow six periods or eight periods system but the instructional hours must be equal for all the periods

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Annexure 2: Nutritional guidelines

BUILD A COLOURFUL PLATE WITH VEGETABLES

STAYING & EATING HEALTHY DURING COVID-19

DO YOU KNOW HOW TO WASH YOUR HANDS?

WASH YOUR HANDS WITH SOAP IN RUNNING WATER FOR ATLEAST 20 SECONDS

- WET HANDS WITH WATER
- APPLY SOAP AND LATHER WELL
- SCRUB PALM TO PALM
- SCRUB BETWEEN FINGERS
- SCRUB BACK OF HANDS
- SCRUB BASE OF THUMBS
- SCRUB BACK OF FINGERS
- SCRUB UNDER FINGER NAILS
- SCRUB WRISTS
- RINSE HANDS WITH RUNNING WATER
- DRY HANDS

GOOD FOOD GUIDE PYRAMID FOR BHUTANESE CHILDREN

MY HEALTHY PLATE

Our hands can serve as a useful guide for measuring appropriate portion size.

Two Fists
Fruit and vegetables

One Fist
Rice, bread, noodle, cereals, cooked pulses, wheat, maize and starchy vegetables

1 Palm
Meat, chicken, fish, eggs and plant protein

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