



NOTIFICATION

Subject : Standard Operating Procedures (SoP) for the opening of schools for 2022 academic session

This is to notify all the schools that, in accordance with the opening of schools for 2022. Ministry of Health (MoH) in consultation with Ministry of Education (MoE) has developed and endorsed following SoP for strict compliance.

1. Rationale :

1. Students 12 years and older received 3rd dose booster (almost all students as per Bhutan Vaccine System data)
2. Students 5-11 years will be fully vaccinated
3. It is important for all the students to receive 3rd dose booster (12-17 years old) and 2nd dose for 5-11 years old before coming to schools
4. Unvaccinated children (if any) shall also be allowed to come to school but must be encouraged to get vaccinated given they will be highly vulnerable to severe disease, and highly prone to the infection when there are many cases in the community and schools
5. Omicron is also mild in students particularly if they received 2nd and 3rd dose vaccine. Students with high-risk comorbidities may suffer from severe symptoms
6. Learning loss alone has been huge and therefore keeping schools closed is not an option during the Omicron wave
7. School teachers are oriented to watch for following severe symptoms in students

2. Testing requirements and symptomatic management

1. No testing of students and staff is required for reporting to the schools/institutions
2. If a student or staff is currently tested positive, you have to mandatorily complete 7 days of home isolation/facility isolation. No need to test for the disease upon completion of an isolation period
3. Symptomatic students and staff are advised not to join schools/institutions until their symptoms are completely resolved. They should report to flu clinic for testing
4. Students and staff who develop any COVID-19/flu-like symptoms during the school hours should be advised to visit flu clinics at the earliest for testing
5. If anyone tests positive, the health team will advise on the case management as per the National Clinical Management Protocol (either home/hostel, facility or hospital isolation)
6. Line lists the students and staff with medical conditions, and monitor their health on regular basis.
7. No need of temperature screening at entry gate of schools daily
8. No need to use foot dips and spraying of disinfectants in classroom and entry gates



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Ministry of Education
Department of School Education
School Health and Nutrition Division



9. If an outbreak occurs in a boarding school, no need to suspend the classes unless the majority of the students (>50% of students are symptomatic/test positive) cannot attend the class due to COVID symptoms (e.g. fever, general weakness, sore throat, coughing, etc)
10. Each school should keep provision of one or two rooms (with beds) each for boys and girls for isolating sick students in boarding schools
11. Serve meals for positive or symptomatic cases after the non-symptomatic and negative students in boarding schools. Designate separate toilets for positive and negative students where feasible
12. If the number of cases are high, these isolation rooms can be used to manage and closely monitor the students with relatively more severe symptoms (not requiring to be taken to hospital)
13. School Health Coordinators should keep adequate stock essential medicine as per the advice of local health authority (paracetamol, cetirizine, vitamins, cough syrup, etc). Local health officials shall issue adequate essential medicines
14. Hostel warden/matron and School Health Coordinator should closely monitor symptomatic students in hostel (2-3 times monitoring in a day)

3. Public Health and Social Measures

1. Continue to use face mask at all times until further notice from the Ministry of Health
2. Staff and students to practice frequent hand washing and cough etiquette diligently
3. Conduct daily reminders to students on hand hygiene, cough etiquette, social distancing and reporting of any illnesses
4. Ensure a procedure for separating sick students and staff from those who are well without creating stigma
5. Maintain confidentiality of the student or staff member who was suspected or has tested positive to prevent stigmatization
6. Brief students and staff on general COVID-19 safety measures and inform them that it is okay to be infected with COVID given it only causes relatively mild disease in fully vaccinated individuals
7. Establish process for informing parents/caregivers, and consulting with health care providers/health authorities wherever possible
8. Plan activities that need gathering to be held in open space
9. Monitor student absenteeism and get updated information daily by class teacher or health coordinators
10. Address mental health/psychosocial support needs in close coordination with School counsellors and health sector



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Basic amenities and infrastructure

1. Identify sick room to temporarily separate sick students and staff
2. Clean classrooms and toilets at least once a day, particularly surfaces that are frequently touched (desks, railings, tables, doorknobs, window handles, teaching and learning aids etc)
3. Keep class rooms fully ventilated
4. Adequate hand washing stations at strategic locations
5. Ensure that toilets and washing stations are supplied with soap and continuous water supply at all times

(Karma Galay)
Director General

Copy:

1. Hon'ble Education Minister, Ministry of Education for your kind information, please.
2. Hon'ble Health Minister, Ministry of Health for your kind information, please.
3. Dasho Secretary, Chairperson, SC19TF-Phuntsholing, EC19TF- Samdrup Jongkhar & WC19TF for your kind information and support please.
4. Director , Office of the Prime Minister, Gyelyong Tshokhang for your kind information.
5. All CDEOs/CTEOs for your kind information and necessary action.
6. Office file.