

GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOLS IN NAMIBIA



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION,
ARTS AND CULTURE

ON THE PREVENTION
AND MANAGEMENT
OF COVID-19





GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOLS IN NAMIBIA

The Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture of the Republic of Namibia remains focused on its mandate of ensuring quality, equitable and inclusive education especially in the face of the global public health crisis brought about by the COVID-19 outbreak, which has impacted our nation and our schools.

Respiratory viral diseases such as **COVID-19** spread when people come into contact with one another. Hence any place where people gather in close proximity can lead to viral transmission. For this reason schools can be breeding grounds for the coronavirus.

We therefore developed these **COVID-19 guidelines for Namibian schools**. The main aim is to provide teachers and school administrations but also learners and parents with general information about COVID-19. In addition, in line with the Ministry's mandate we intend to equip our schools with the tools to create safe(r) learning environments for our children and teachers in these trying times.



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION,
ARTS AND CULTURE

CONTENTS

What is COVID 19?	1
What are the symptoms?	2
Common signs & symptoms of Covid-19	2
Some patients may also experience	2
In severe cases	2
Is there a cure?	2
Who can get it?	4
How soon would I have symptoms after contracting the virus?	4
Transmission	5
How do I get COVID-19?	5
How does COVID-19 enter our body?	5
Prevention: How do I prevent getting COVID-19?	6
Wash your hands frequently	6
How do I wash my hands properly?	6
Cleaning & disinfecting your surroundings.....	8
What can schools do and consider in addition?	9
General (hygiene) considerations	10
Information for signs in key areas	12
Upon entry onto school premises	12
On the school premises	13
In the classrooms	13
Breaks & Meal areas	13
Teachers lounges & other meeting areas	13
Keeping distance	14
What to do when you suspect someone	15
in the school has COVID-19?	





What is COVID 19?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause illnesses ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-COV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-COV).

COVID-19 is a disease caused by a new strain of coronavirus.

COVID-19 : CO stands for corona, VI for virus, D for disease and 19 for 2019.

30th January 2020, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the coronavirus outbreak a pandemic as the virus continued to spread across the world.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

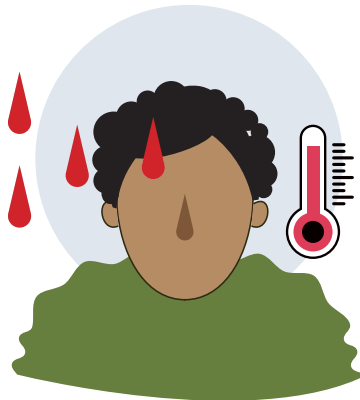
Common signs and symptoms of Covid-19



Dry cough



Shortness of breath or difficulty in breathing



Fever of 38 degree Celsius or more

OR AT LEAST TWO OF THESE SYMPTOMS

- Fever
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills

In severe cases

Hospitalisation will be required:

- Pneumonia
- Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS)
- Kidney failure
- Aches and pains
- Death

- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

IS THERE A CURE?

No. Currently there is no available vaccine or cure for COVID-19. However, many of the symptoms can be treated and getting early care from a healthcare provider can make the disease less dangerous.

WHO CAN GET IT?

Everybody is at risk of contracting COVID-19. However, the following population groups appear to be at a higher risk of developing severe symptoms:

- Older persons
- People with chronic medical conditions such as high blood pressure, heart diseases, respiratory disease such as asthma or TB, diabetes, cancer and pregnant women.



HOW SOON WOULD I HAVE SYMPTOMS AFTER CONTRACTING THE VIRUS?

Incubation (time between infection and actually showing symptoms) is 2-14 days after infection. Symptoms are likely to occur within 14 days after infection if you have been infected. Therefore, 14 days quarantine is implemented when people might have been exposed to the virus. That also means people can have COVID-19 and not show symptoms **yet**.

TRANSMISSION

How do I get COVID-19?

- Through droplets when someone speaks, coughs or sneezes.
- Close contact such as touching and hand shaking.
- The COVID-19 virus survives on surfaces for several hours, but simple disinfectants can kill it. Touching surfaces such as door knobs, tables, cell phones etc., that are contaminated with the virus.

How does COVID-19 enter our body?

The virus enters your body via your eyes, nose and mouth, so it is important to avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.



Through droplets



Touching surfaces



Close contact

PREVENTION

How do I prevent getting COVID-19?

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and under running water or clean your hands with an alcohol-based sanitiser.
- Wear a mask when in public
- Cover your mouth and nose with a flexed elbow or use a tissue when coughing and sneezing and throw away the tissue in a closed bin.
- Keep a distance of minimum 1 metre between yourself and others.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Stay home and isolate when you are feeling sick
- Avoid travelling



Wear a mask



Stay at home

WASH YOUR HANDS FREQUENTLY, ESPECIALLY

- after coughing or sneezing,
- when caring for the sick
- before, during and after you prepare food,
- before and after eating,
- after toilet use,

How do I wash my hands properly?

To get properly germ-free hands, you need to lather them up with soap, and scrub for at least 20 seconds (about the time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice) under clean, running water.



Water and soap



Palm to palm



Between fingers



Back of hands

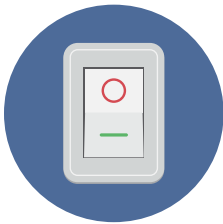


Focus on wrists

- after handling animals or animal waste.
- After playing games or exercises

Cleaning and disinfecting your surroundings

- Clean and disinfect touched surfaces frequently. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.



light switches



phones



keyboards

- Use detergent or soap and water to clean the surfaces and disinfect the surfaces (with disinfectant, bleach or washing powder).

WHAT CAN SCHOOLS DO AND CONSIDER IN ADDITION?

These are uncertain times for teachers, parents and learners. As learners and possibly parents are likely relying on teachers for updated and reliable information on COVID-19, please make sure you regularly inform yourself through reliable sources such as the Ministry of Health and Social Services.

In addition make sure to listen to learner's concerns and answer their questions in an age-appropriate manner; without overwhelming them with too much information. While you should adhere to the above general measures, you should also think about how you can apply some of these measures to create a safe(r) learning environment for teachers and learners alike.

You will have to assess, which measures you can best implement in your learning environment with the resources that you have. You could also consider engaging other stakeholders in your community to extend and implement measures such as teachers, parents, local authorities, ministry representatives, NGOs and private sector organisations you have access to. You should share and discuss potential measures with teachers, parents, learners and other staff such as cleaning staff, inspectors or visiting edutainment teams.

GENERAL (HYGIENE) CONSIDERATIONS

1

Promote and demonstrate regular hand washing and positive hygiene behaviors and monitor their uptake.

- Ensure adequate, clean and clearly marked separate toilets for girls and boys
- Ensure soap and safe water is available at age-appropriate hand washing stations
- Possible increase hand wash stations (Tippy taps etc.)
- Encourage frequent and thorough handwashing (at least 20 seconds)
- Place hand sanitizers in toilets, classrooms, halls, and near exits where possible (or let teachers have the hand sanitizers to dispense)
- Incorporate relevant health education into other subjects.
- Teach and model good hygiene practices

2

Clean and disinfect school buildings, classrooms and especially water and sanitation facilities

- At least once a day, particularly surfaces that are touched by many people (railings, lunch tables, sports equipment, door and window handles, toys, teaching and learning aids etc.)
- Use sodium hypochlorite at 0.5% (equivalent 5000ppm) for disinfecting surfaces and 70% ethyl alcohol for disinfection of small items, and ensure appropriate equipment for cleaning is available

3

Increase airflow and ventilation where climate allows (open windows, use air conditioning where available, etc.)

4

Ensure trash is removed daily and disposed of safely

- If possible have closable bins in all classrooms and on the school premises
- Wash hands after handling solid waste

5

Learners, teachers and other school staff (admin, security, cleaners, etc.), who are not feeling well should stay home!

6

Post at strategic spots clear child-friendly signs encouraging good hand and respiratory hygiene practices

- Upon entry onto school premises
- On the school premises
- In the classrooms
- In areas for breaks and meals
- Boys and girls toilets
- Teachers lounges and other meeting areas
- Hostels

INFORMATION FOR SIGNS IN KEY AREAS:

Find some suggestions for information that could be displayed at the suggested strategic locations.

UPON ENTRY ONTO SCHOOL PREMISES

Controlled, orderly and supervised entry.
Not everyone at the same time

Keep distance whenever possible
(minimum 1 meter)

Parents or general public should not enter
the school premises without appointment
(to be recorded for tracing)

Upon entry of premises: Wash hands or
disinfect them with hand sanitiser

ON THE SCHOOL PREMISES

- Wash hands several times during the day
- Coughing or sneezing into the elbow or a tissue (which is thrown into a covered bin immediately)
- Keep distance! (minimum 1 meter)
- Avoid screaming, running, contact game playing
- Avoid assemblies, sports games

IN THE CLASSROOMS

- Before entry into a classroom wash hands
- Ventilate the room regularly if possible (e.g. every hour for 5 minutes)
- Coughing or sneezing into elbow or a tissue (which is thrown into a covered bin immediately)
- Avoid tool sharing, if unavoidable, wash hands after every session or class. Shared tools could be teaching board, chalks, markers, rulers, sharpeners etc.
- Consider having a fixed seating chart, where every learner has a fixed seat in a classroom. Seating charts should be written down and shared with all learners, teachers and ideally parents
- Keep reminding learners and teachers to keep distance! (minimum 1 meter)

TEACHERS LOUNGES AND OTHER MEETING AREAS

- Not all at once. Set maximum persons for room per time period
- Keep distance (minimum 1 meter)
- Coughing or sneezing into elbow or a tissue (which is thrown into a covered bin immediately)
- Encourage parents to engage teachers via phone and or online

HOSTELS

- Controlled entry and exit. *Not everyone at the same time*
- Keep distance whenever possible (minimum 1 meter)
- Upon entry of premises: Wash hands or disinfect them with hand sanitiser
- Have guidelines on who learners can contact if they do not feel well
- If learners don't feel well they should not go to class and need to isolate without being stigmatized

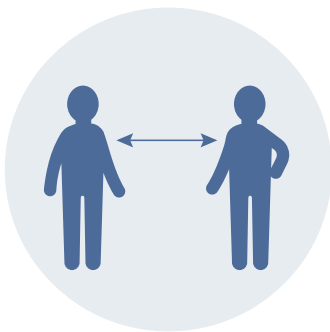
BREAKS AND MEAL AREAS

- Not all at once. Set maximum
- Ensure good discipline – no pushing, stampede or running
- Keep distance! (minimum 1 meter)
- Coughing or sneezing into elbow or a tissue (which is thrown into a covered bin immediately)
- Wash hands before and after eating
- Disinfect eating tables and utensils used after each break and meals

KEEP

DISTANCE

It should be strongly encouraged that everyone (learners and teachers) keep physical distance (1 meter minimum). Consider setting maximum capacities at which learners and teachers will be able to keep the safe 1 meter distance in shared spaces. Consider shifts, so that not everyone is in an area at the same time. (Re-)Arrange seating accordingly in advance and consider markings on the floor wherever there might be lines:



1m distance

- o In teachers lounges/rooms (if applicable)
- o In break and or lunch areas
- o In classrooms
- o On playgrounds (using colour blocks or stones in sandy areas)

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU SUSPECT SOMEONE IN THE SCHOOL HAS COVID-19?

Create a set of rules and behaviours (protocol or Standard Operating Procedures, SOP) for this situation. Teachers could check on every learner first thing in the morning before lessons begin. If possible and available every learner's temperature should be taken with a thermo gun. If a learner is showing any symptoms (difficulty in breathing, cold/ cough, fever or flu) his/her parents or caregivers can immediately be informed to come and pick up their child.

Generally, it is not helpful if teachers, learners and parents panic. Prepare for this in advance. It will be helpful to develop a communication plan so you are prepared and are not caught off guard and you can involve teachers, parents and learners in this. Ideally also inform teachers, learners and parents of your protocol and how every group can assist in appropriately managing the situation. This will help the school to manage and avoid stigma and discrimination.

Consider the steps on the next page.

- Call the national toll free: or 0800 100 100
- Isolate or send home the affected person(s) to avoid infecting others
- Encourage them to stay home (They should not come to school or public spaces) to avoid transmission of COVID-19 to others
- In consultation with health practitioners the person needs to get tested for COVID-19. Testing positive is not a death sentence. Many people who received appropriate supportive care have recovered from the virus
- Trace, who they have been in contact with within the school and encourage those traced to self-quarantine for 14 days until it has been cleared whether or not the learner or teacher has contracted COVID-19. Provide this information to the authorities (the classroom seating charts, schedules etc. will make it easier to trace potential contact between learners, teachers or parents)



