



GAUTENG PROVINCE

EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR THE
CONTAINMENT/MANAGEMENT OF COVID-19 FOR
CHILDCARE FACILITIES, SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL
COMMUNITIES**

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR THE CONTAINMENT/MANAGEMENT OF COVID-19 FOR CHILDCARE FACILITIES, SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

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1. PREAMBLE

On 7 January 2020, Chinese scientists confirmed a cluster of pneumonia cases identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China in December 2019 was associated with a novel coronavirus. The virus has been named “SARS-CoV-2” and the disease it causes is called “Coronavirus Disease 2019”, or COVID-19.

As of 2 March 2020, more COVID-19 cases and deaths have been reported from 60 countries. There has been increasing concern that SARS-CoV-2 could cause the next global pandemic. The World Health Organisation’s (WHO) International Health Regulations Emergency Committee declared the outbreak a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) on 30 January 2020 and South Africa activated its Emergency Operations Center (EOC) on 31 January 2020.

With the first case confirmed on 5 March 2020 by the Minister of Health, Dr Zweli Mkhize, there were a total of 240 confirmed cases with 0 deaths as of 21 March 2020. On 15 March 2020, the first internal transmission was announced by President Cyril Ramaphosa, who declared a national state of disaster lasting for three months if not extended or cancelled, with a partial travel ban, travel advisories, discouraging public transport, encouraging the closing of schools and prohibiting gatherings of more than 100 people.

Subsequent to this declaration the various organs of state, including the Department of Basic Education (DBE) had to quickly put drastic measures in place to avert further spread of the virus. In line with the declaration, the DBE decided to close schools earlier, on Wednesday, 18 March 2020, in accordance with the pronouncement by the President on 15 March 2020. This decision has been informed by the warnings provided by the National Institution of Communicable Diseases and WHO that have highlighted the alarming increase of infections within the country. Schools have been identified as one of the biggest threats in terms of the transmission.

The DBE and Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) further issued circulars on the Containment Guidelines and Closure of Schools to all Public Schools, District Offices, Unions, School Governing Body Associations, Provincial Education Departments and Independent Schools. This was followed by statements delivered by the Minister of Education, Mrs Angie Motshekga, MP, after briefings with education stakeholders.

This Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for the Containment and Management of COVID-19 must be adhered to by all administrators in Childcare Facilities and Schools in the Education Sector.

Finally, the Standard Operating Procedures must be read in conjunction with the key and relevant legislation, policies, guidelines and frameworks.

2. PURPOSE OF THE STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

These Standard Operating Procedures for the Containment and Management of COVID-19 for Childcare Facilities, Schools and School Communities provide guidelines for all administrators on the steps that need to be undertaken in order to prevent the spread and manage cases of COVID-19.

3. OBJECTIVES

The general objectives of these SOPs are to stipulate the guidelines for the provision of the prevention of the spread of COVID-19 and management of COVID-19 cases in Childcare Facilities and Schools. The information provided seeks to:

- 3.1 Help administrators of childcare facilities and primary and high schools (hereafter referred to as schools) prevent the spread of COVID-19 among learners and educators, support staff and officials in the education sector;
- 3.2 Help childcare facilities and schools to understand the protocol to be followed should a case be identified; and
- 3.3 Provide considerations to help administrators plan for the continuity of teaching and learning if there is a need to quarantine learners or staff within schools or close schools as a result of the spread of COVID-19.

4. TARGET AUDIENCE

These SOPs apply to:

- 4.1 DBE (at national, provincial and district levels; School Management Teams (SMTs); School Governing Bodies (SGB); and School-Based Support Teams (SBSTs));
- 4.2 Department of Health (DOH), (at national, provincial and district levels; and school health teams);
- 4.3 Department of Social Development (DSD), (at national, provincial and district levels; childcare facilities); and
- 4.4 Any other partner that is involved in or providing health and other essential services in schools.

5. GUIDANCE FOR CHILDCARE FACILITIES AND SCHOOLS ON THE PREVENTION OF THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

The DBE developed guidance for childcare facilities and schools based on what is currently known about the transmission and severity of COVID-19. Guidance will be updated as new information emerges. Please check the NICD website (www.nicd.ac.za) regularly, for updated guidance.

Schools can play an important role in efforts to control the spread of COVID-19. Schools can take steps to circulate information about the disease and its potential transmission within their school community. Schools can prepare to take steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among their learners and staff should health officials identify such a need.

School plans should be designed to minimize disruption to teaching and learning and protect learners and staff from social stigma and discrimination. Plans can build on everyday practices such as encouraging hand hygiene, monitoring absenteeism, communicating routinely, amongst others.

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The Gauteng Department of Education will supply all schools with a single package of hand sanitizers, surgical gloves, surgical masks and Government Regulation 7 First Aid Kits. SGBs are expected to supplement these supplies going forward.

5.1 Role of childcare facilities and schools in responding to COVID-19

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by a novel (new) virus, and we are learning more about it every day. There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. At this point, the best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes it. Stopping transmission (spread) of the virus through everyday practices is the best way to keep people healthy. More information on COVID-19 is available here www.nicd.ac.za; www.health.gov.za and www.education.gov.za. Childcare facilities and schools, working together with local health departments, have an important role in slowing the spread of diseases to help ensure learners have safe and healthy learning environments.

For possible community transmission of COVID-19, the most important thing for childcare facilities and schools to do now is **plan and prepare**. As the global outbreak evolves, schools should prepare for the possibility of community-level outbreaks as well as possible recommendations from health officials for learners, staff or whole classes or grades to be quarantined at home. School dismissal could be recommended in certain circumstances. Decisions about appropriate public health interventions should always be made in discussion with public health officials who have access to all the relevant information. These decisions include:

- i) Whether learners or educators should remain home from school for a period; and
- ii) Whether learners in sections of a school or a whole school should be dismissed.

In this regard, Childcare Facilities and Schools want to **be ready** if COVID-19 does appear in their communities.

5.2 Stage 1: Steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in a childcare facility or school

The Education sector supports the national efforts to fight the spread of COVID-19 by providing knowledge towards prevention, treatment, care and support of those who are infected amongst learners, educators, school support staff, parents and school communities. School administrators can take steps to help stop or slow the spread of respiratory infectious diseases, including COVID-19. Childcare Facilities and Schools must be **COVID-19 free zones**.

Since COVID-19 is a new virus, there is currently no vaccine available. However, many of the symptoms can be treated. Getting early care from a healthcare provider can make the disease less dangerous. Generally, learners, educators, support staff, officials, parents and communities should observe the following:

- Heed the directives by the President and the guidance provided by the Ministry of Health;
- Avoid public gatherings of over 100 people as the disease is spread through direct contact with respiratory droplets of an infected person which are generated through coughing and sneezing;
- Maintain a distance of at least one meter between yourself and others;
- Avoid shaking hands;
- Wash hands frequently with water and soap. Where water is not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser to disinfect hands;
- Minimise touching the face (i.e. eyes, nose, mouth) with your hands. The COVID-19 virus may survive on surfaces for several hours. However, simple disinfectants can kill the virus;

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- Consult a health care facility if you suspect an infection of COVID-19;
- Inform the education authorities **immediately** if a learner, educator, support staff or parent/caregiver has been in direct contact with an infected person, or if they are diagnosed with COVID-19; and
- Eradicate all forms of stigma and discrimination in schools.

5.2.1 Roles and Responsibility of the SMT, Staff and SGB

- Stay informed about COVID -19 through reputable sources such as NICD, the Department of Basic Education and the Department of Health and share information with all stakeholders;
- Put in place an advocacy programme for learners to explain to them about COVID 19 (what it is, symptoms, how it is spread and prevention, as well as, to emphasise the importance of when, why and how to wash hands , for example after bathroom, before meals, as frequently as possible, after touching nose, mouth, eyes, after playing, and having touched surfaces, including books and other learning resources and discourage all forms of stigma and discrimination;
- Place signs/posters encouraging good hand and respiratory hygiene practices
- SGBs must procure sanitizers, soap and disposable drying material for all classrooms, toilets, offices and staffrooms;
- Ensure that ablution facilities and washbasins are functional;
- Reinforce frequent handwashing and sanitation. Prepare and maintain handwashing stations with soap and water, and if possible, place alcohol-based hand rub (hand sanitizers) in each classroom, at entrances and exits, and near lunchrooms and toilets. The following areas were identified as possible critical control points in response to COVID 19 at schools:

Area	Type of Hygiene Control
Guardhouse/ School entry point	Hand sanitizer points
Administration Block entrance	Hand sanitizers and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should be provided to all persons entering the school.
Classrooms (Including Grade R) entry point, Laboratories, Ablution facilities, Library, Specialist Rooms,	Sanitizers and PPE
Nutrition/ Food Preparation areas	Sanitizers, PPE and Top disinfectants

- Ensure that cleaning staff clean and disinfect school buildings and that classrooms and especially water and sanitation facilities are cleaned 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.) Follow environmental health cleaning and decontamination protocols/procedures;
- Ensure that trash is removed daily and disposed of safely;
- Workshop food handlers on COVID 19 (what it is, symptoms, how it is spread and prevention), as well as, emphasise their roles and responsibilities with regards to hygiene, food preparation and serving of food (as provided for in Section 5.2.3 below);
- Ensure, that in cases where the school provides scholar transport that the transport is disinfected and sanitized and that sanitizers are available for learners on the transport (as provided for in Section 5.2.4 below); and
- Ensure that proper access control of school entrances is implemented at school (as provided for in Section 5.2.5 below).

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- Educators should :
 - have integrated health promotion and disease prevention and management in daily activities and lessons. Health promotion content should be age-appropriate and disability responsive;
 - ensure that there is an increase in airflow and ventilation in classes.

5.2.2 Learner Hygiene

Learners should be encouraged to:

- Wash their hands frequently, always with soap and water for at least 20 seconds;
- Keep their nails and teeth clean;
- Refrain from touching their eyes, mouth and face;
- Not share cups, eating utensils, food or drinks with others;
- Sneeze or cough into a bent elbow or tissue, discard the tissue and wash their hands;
- Refrain from teasing anyone about being sick;
- Share what they learn about preventing disease with their family and friends, and younger children.
- Tell their teacher or parents, if they feel sick.

5.2.3 Food Preparation and Serving

Transmission of COVID -19 through food could occur if a person infected with the virus prepares or handles food with dirty hands and contaminates it. Cooking food and observing good hygiene practices when handling and preparing food are effective at preventing contamination. Food handlers must observe the following:

- Wash hands with soap and water before and after touching the food during preparation;
- Wash hands with soap before serving learners with food;
- Sanitization of work surface, including tables, stoves and other resources;
- Keep all appliances clean
- Wear clean kitchen attire at all times;
- Wear head gear and masks to cover their mouths;
- Wear closed shoes to protect feet;
- Ensure the proper food storage in refrigerators and lockable cupboards;
- Rinse food stuff before cooking and fruit before serving to the learners;
- Cook food thoroughly;;
- Clean the counters, sinks and floors regularly; and
- Avoid cross contamination of food.

5.2.4 Disinfecting and Sanitizing Scholar Transport

In terms of the “Measures to Prevent and Combat the Spread of Covid-19 in The Public Transport Services” as published through General Notice No. 412 of 26 March 2020 in Government Gazette No 43157)

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- Transport service providers are required to ensure that buses are disinfected before and after use (before and after each single trip) and that door handles, window handles, arm rests and hand rails and other surfaces touched regularly are cleaned and disinfected ;
- A transport load is not to exceed 50% of its passenger capacity – to implement the one meter physical distancing;
- Transport service providers are required to provide sanitizers to transport coordinators;
- Transport coordinators must ensure that learners sanitize their hands before getting onto the bus;
- Busses will be monitored for compliance by Departmental officials.

5.2.5 Access control by parents and other Third Parties

The SMT and SGB must ensure that:

- Strict access control measures are put in place, including the signing of register by all visitors;
- All visitors must sanitize their hands;
- All visitors must report to the reception area;
- All visitors except Government official to make an appointment and state the nature of their visit;
- There is regular communication with parents through newsletters, telephone, bulk SMS messages, emails, etc. to minimise parents meetings/ gatherings;
- Very limited class based parents meetings – if taking place, should be limited to one parent per learner to respect the one metre physical distance and social gathering restrictions.

Make sure that everyone in the Childcare Facility or School has up to date information on how to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (see link to NICD, www.nicd.ac.za, guidance on handwashing etc.). For updates and the latest information, refer to the following resources:

- i) National Department of Health: <https://www.health.gov.za>
- ii) National Institute for Communicable Diseases: <https://www.nicd.ac.za>
- iii) National Institute of Occupational Institute: <https://www.nioh.ac.za>
- iv) World Health Organisation: <https://www.who.int>
- v) Department of Basic Education: <https://www.dbe.gov.za>
- vi) National Health Laboratory Services: <https://www.nhls.ac.za>
- vii) Corona Virus Hotline Number: 0800 02 99 99

5.3 Management of COVID-19 Cases in a Childcare facility or School

5.3.1 A child or learner **appears ill** or **displaying symptoms** associated with COVID-19

Parents should be encouraged not to send ill children to school but take them to their nearest health facility or medical practitioner. The procedures below must be followed when child/learners arrive at school and appears ill or displays symptoms associated with COVID-19. When a child/learner is suspected to be sick or displays symptoms; being high fever, respiratory distress, dry cough etc. at school:

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- Isolate the learners and keep him or her separate from well learners and staff until they can be assessed by a health professional.
- In serious cases, learners may be referred directly, with the consent of parents, to the nearest clinic or health practitioner for assessment, depending on the situation/context, or sent home or collected by the parents. Procedures need to be shared with parents, learners and staff ahead of time.
- School should plan ahead with local health authorities, school health staff and update emergency contact lists.
- The GDE District School Health coordinator and/or Cluster leader (IDSO) should also be informed of any suspected infectious disease outbreak.
- This information may also be conveyed via the Provincial Outbreak Response Team's Whatsapp platform to expedite speedy response time (e.g. dispatching Emergency Services (EMS) and DORT/PORT support to the affected school and learners)
- Remember that **schools are not expected to screen learners or to identify cases of COVID-19** and most respiratory illnesses are not COVID-19, therefore call the school health nurse, nearest health facility or NICD toll free number (0800 029 999) or number of provincial officials (see table under no.8), provided in the DBE Circular 3 of 2020.
- The health professional will advise on further action to be taken once diagnosis is confirmed.

NB. Parents/Guardian and Principal of the learner should be informed immediately, by the Health Professional. The Principal must inform the Cluster Leader or IDSO immediately

5.3.2 Action to be taken when a case of COVID-19 is confirmed

- The Childcare Facilities or Schools will be contacted by the relevant public health officials to discuss the case, identify people who have been in contact with them and advise on any actions or precautions that should be taken.
- If you have not yet been contacted please contact the public hotline 0800 029 999 who will refer you to the relevant contact.
- An assessment of the Childcare Facility or School will be undertaken by the public health officials with relevant staff. Advice on the management of pupils or learners and staff will be based on this assessment.
- If there is a confirmed case, a risk assessment will be undertaken by the educational establishment with advice from the public health officials.
- In most cases, closure of the facility or school will be unnecessary. This decision will be facility or school specific, based on various factors such as establishment, size and pupil mixing.

5.3.3 Action to be taken on a child/learner who may have been exposed to a suspected case of COVID-19

- If a child/learner has been in contact with a suspected case in a childcare facility or school, no restrictions or special control measures are required while laboratory test results for COVID-19 are awaited.
- There is no need to close the institution or send other children/learners or staff home.
- As a precautionary measure, the NICD are currently testing a very large number of people who have travelled back from affected countries, the vast majority of whom test negative.
- Therefore, until the outcome of test results is known there is no action that staff members need to take.

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5.3.4 Child/Learner who may have been exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19.

- All close contacts (**fellow learners, educators, and general staff**) of a confirmed COVID-19 case are required to stay at home for 14 days while being monitored for symptoms. They may not attend school.
- Learners, **educators and general staff** who are not contacts of a confirmed case should attend school. Family and friends who have not had close contact with the original confirmed case do not need to take any precautions or make any changes to their own activities such as attending childcare or educational settings or work, unless they become unwell.
- Specifically, learners who have interacted with a healthy contact of a confirmed case should not be excluded from school. The reason for this is that asymptomatic spread of COVID-19, if it occurs is likely very uncommon, meaning: for a person who comes into contact with a healthy contact of a case, it is very unlikely to result in transmission.
- All case contacts who become symptomatic will be immediately screened for COVID-19 and if found to be a case, active contact tracing and self-quarantine of all contacts will be implemented.

NB. Keeping learners at home from school or closing schools is a serious decision which may restrict the learners' ability to acquire education and have knock-on effects in terms of the need for childcare. All decisions for learners to stay home from school, based on possible exposure to or infection with COVID-19 should be justified by available scientific evidence.

5.4 Guidelines for Heads of Departments and Supervisors on COVID-19: Procedure regarding employees

The public service is the largest employer in the country and has the legal obligation in accordance with Section 8, of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) 1993, as amended to, where reasonably practicable, provide and maintain a safe, health work environment that is without risk to employees.

Regulation 53 provides that the Head of Department shall establish and maintain a safe and healthy work environment for employees of the department and a safe and healthy service delivery environment for members of the public service regulation.

Given the ability to rapidly spread, the management of confirmed and suspected COVID-19 cases is of paramount importance. In this regard, the Head of Departments should observe the following guidelines as minimum:

5.4.1 An employee tested positive for COVID-19

- The Head of Department should formally grant approval for sick leave in accordance with the Determination and Directive on Leave of Absence in the Public Service or **the Personnel Administrative Measures as amended** or incapacity Leave and Ill-health Retirement processes if the employee has exhausted his/her normal sick leave.
- The Head of Department should formally grant approval in accordance with Public Service Regulation 51 for all employees who worked closely with the **infected** employee to self-quarantine for a period of 14 days to ensure the infection does not spread. This must be done with the relevant authorities of and National Department of Health (NDoH) protocols. A list of such employees must be kept and submitted to the DPSA.
- The clearing/disinfection of the affected workspace must be facilitated. Contact must be maintained with such employees as a means of monitoring and evaluation.

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- Report the cases in the required format to the DPSA via the dedicated email address COVID-19@dpsa.gov.za.

5.4.2 An employee was exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19

- In terms of the NDoH's guidelines all those employees who were in contact with the infected person are required to self-quarantine at home for a period of 14 days or for a duration as prescribed by the NDoH while being monitored for symptoms.
- The Head of Department should formally grant approval in accordance with Public Service Regulation 51 for employee to self-quarantine for a period of 14 days or as prescribed by NDoH to ensure the infection does not spread. This must be done in consultation with the relevant authorities. Such employees can be requested to work remotely.
- The HoD must ensure that the affected workplace/s are cleaned/disinfected.
- Contact must be maintained with such employee as a means of monitoring and evaluation.
- Report the cases in the required format to the DPSA via the dedicated email address COVID-19@dpsa.gov.za.

5.4.3 An employee was exposed to an unconfirmed case of COVID-19

- If an employee has been in contact with a person who has not yet been confirmed as infected by COVID-19 while laboratory test results for COVID-19 are awaited. Until the outcomes of test results is known, the Head of Department can decide, inform and guided by NDoH, Legal Services and Human Resources if restrictions or special control measures need to be applied until the results are known.
- Once the results are known, protocols by NDoH are effected, if applicable.
- Report the cases in the required format to the DPSA via the dedicated email address COVID-19@dpsa.gov.za

5.4.4 An employee appears ill and reports for duty displaying symptoms associated with COVID-19.

- If an employee presents themselves at work with similar symptoms consistent with COVID-19; being high fever, respiratory distress, dry cough etc. they must be advised to contact the hotline, consult a medical professional and follow the NDoH protocol for COVID-19.
- The employee should be temporarily isolated in a sickbay or room identified for temporary isolation while arrangements are made for them to be transported to a medical facility. Employees must be encouraged to seek medical attention if they display flu like symptoms and to not report for duty.
- Further actions should be taken once confirmation of diagnosis of a medical professional has been confirmed.
- Report the cases in the required format to the DPSA via the dedicated email address COVID-19@dpsa.gov.za.

5.4.5 An employee or employees refuse to report for duty based on the fear or being infected by COVID-19.

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- The employment relationship is the legal link between employers and employees and stipulate that a person (employee) will perform work or a service under certain conditions in return for remuneration (employer).
- The onus is on the employee/s to demonstrate that the workplace is a risk and unsafe in relationship to the virus.
- Refusal to report for duty, contrary to the instructions of the supervisor or HOD means that such absence is unpaid and should be dealt with in terms of the Disciplinary Code.

5.5 Management and Monitoring of absenteeism

- Review attendance and sick leave policies. Encourage learners and staff (**educator and support staff**) to stay home when sick. Use flexibility, when possible, to allow staff to stay home to care for sick family members.
- Discourage the use of perfect attendance awards and incentives as these may encourage people to come to school sick.
- Identify critical job functions and positions, and plan for alternative coverage by cross-training staff.
- Determine what level of absenteeism will disrupt continuity of teaching and learning.

5.6 Staff members and learners who plan to travel, or have recently traveled, to areas with community spread of COVID-19.

- South Africa has implemented specific travel restrictions to countries with high COVID-19 incidences. While the risks of contracting COVID-19 infection are generally low and the consequences in most cases are mild, there are other associated risks of international travel. This includes cancelled flights, new travel restrictions and/or airport closures and possible quarantine in the event one comes into contact with a suspected case. The risk of travel disruptions or acquiring COVID-19 in a foreign location varies by location and the risk situation is rapidly evolving. It is not possible to predict the level of risk in any location in the future.
- If members of school communities become infected during travel, they could potentially introduce COVID-19 into the community on return.
- The NICD has developed guidance on quarantine including guidance on appropriate precautions to take when returning from travel in affected countries and these should be followed (www.nicd.ac.za). In light of this, staff and learners who will be travelling internationally (including school tours) in the next months should reconsider the benefits and risks of undertaking such travel.
- **Provincial Travel embargos have been put in place across the country, Learners and Educators that reside in provinces other than the one they attend school or work in, that would have left on school closure but before the National Lockdown need to make Principals and school authorities aware for the necessary screening and travel arrangements back into the respective province.**
- Schools may need to postpone or cancel trips that could expose learners and staff to potential community spread of COVID-19. Learners returning from travel to areas with community spread of COVID-19 must follow guidance on the NICD website. **Schools can also consult with local health officials or call the NICD community hotline to discuss travel concerns 0800 029 999.**

5.7 Stage 3: Closure of a unit/component/office/department if an employee tested positive for COVID-19

Preparing for possible closure of an education institution should only be considered following recommendations from a public health official. Temporarily closing an institution or schools is a possible strategy to stop or slow the further spread of COVID-19 in communities. School administrators should work in close collaboration and coordination with health officials to make dismissal and large event cancellation decisions. Departments and Schools are not expected to make decisions about dismissal or canceling events on their own. Schools can seek specific guidance from health officials to determine if, when, and for how long to take these steps. Large event cancellations or school dismissals may be recommended for 14 days, or possibly longer if advised by local health officials and the DBE. The nature of these actions (e.g., scope, duration) may change as the local situation evolves.

5.7.1 Considerations for closing a Department

- Report the exposure to the NDoH
- The Department must contact the relevant health official to discuss the case, identify people who have been exposed and advise on any occurrence based on this assessment
- An assessment of the institution will be conducted by the public health official and advice on the management of the occurrence based on this assessment
- The assessment decision to close a unit/component(s) in the institution is the prerogative of the Head of Department and will be based on the advice of the public health official.
- The closure of unit/component(s) in the institution must be considered with due regard to the extent of the exposure and its implication on health and safety including service delivery needs of the department.
- Report the cases in the required format to the DPSA via the dedicated email address COVID-19@dpsa.gov.za.

5.7.2 Consideration for closing a childcare facility or school

During school dismissals, childcare programmes and schools may stay open for staff members (unless ill) while learners stay home. Keeping facilities open will allow educators to develop and deliver lessons and materials remotely, thus maintaining continuity of teaching and learning. Furthermore, it would allow other staff members to continue to provide services and help with additional response efforts.

If schools are dismissed, schools can consider the following steps:

- Temporarily cancel extracurricular group activities and large events.
- Cancel or postpone events such as field trips, and sporting events.
- Discourage learners and staff from gathering or socializing anywhere.
- Discourage gatherings at places like a friend's house, a favourite restaurant, or the local shopping mall.
- Ensure continuity of education.
- Review continuity plans, including plans for the continuity of teaching and learning. Implement e-learning plans, including digital and distance learning options as feasible and appropriate.
- If necessary, determine, in consultation with school district officials or other relevant state or local partners:

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- How to convert face-to-face lessons into online lessons and how to train educators to do so;
- How to triage technical issues if faced with limited IT support and staff;
- How to encourage appropriate adult supervision while learners are using distance learning approaches; and
- How to deal with the potential lack of learners' access to computers and the Internet at home.
- Ensure continuity of meal programmes, if applicable.
 - Consider ways to distribute food to learners through the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP); and
- If there is community spread of COVID-19, design strategies to avoid distribution in settings where people might gather in a group or crowd. Consider options such as “grab-and-go” bagged lunches or meal delivery.

6. HOW TO CLEAN EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS WHERE THERE WERE LEARNERS, STAFF OR OTHERS WITH SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED CASES OF COVID-19

Coronavirus symptoms are similar to a flu-like illness and include cough, fever, or shortness of breath. Once symptomatic, all surfaces that the suspected case has come into contact with must be cleaned using disposable cloths and household detergents. These include:

- all surfaces and objects which are visibly contaminated with body fluids; and
- all potentially contaminated high-contact areas such as toilets, door handles and telephones.

Public areas where a symptomatic individual has passed through and spent minimal time in (such as corridors) but which are not visibly contaminated with body fluids do not need to be specially cleaned and disinfected. If a person becomes ill in a shared space, these should be cleaned as detailed above.

7. WASTE REMOVAL WITHIN THE INSTITUTION WITH SUSPECTED COVID-19 CASES

All waste that has been in contact with the individual, including used tissues, and masks if used, should be put in a plastic rubbish bag and tied when full; the handler should ensure that gloves are worn. The plastic bag should then be placed in a second bin bag and tied. It can then be put in the normal waste.

8. COMMUNICATION PLANS FOR USE WITH THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY.

- Include strategies for sharing information with staff, learners, and their families.
- Include information about steps being taken by the school or childcare facility to prepare, and how additional information will be shared.

School administrators can also support their school community by sharing resources with staff, families and, age-appropriately, with learners. Consider sharing the following fact sheets and information sources found on the NICD website www.nicd.ac.za and the DBE website www.education.gov.za such as the Frequently Asked Questions on COVID-19.

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Provincial Communicable Disease Control Directorate			
Eastern Cape	Thomas Dlamini Nosimpiwo Mgobo	thomas.dlamini@echealth.gov.za Nosimpiwo.Mgobo@echealth.gov.za	083 378 0189 060 579 9027
Free State	Dikeledi Baleni Babsy Nyokong	balenid@fshealth.gov.za nyokongb@fshealth.gov.za	083 757 8217 082 463 7499
Gauteng	Chika Asomugha Caroline Kesebilwe	Chika.Asomugha@gauteng.gov.za Caroline.kesebilwe@gauteng.gov.za	082 330 1490 083 490 8165
KwaZulu-Natal	Premi Govender	premi.govender@kznhealth.gov.za	071 609 2505
Limpopo	Marlene Freda Ngobeni Mashudu P. Mudau	Marlene.Ngobeni@dhsd.limpopo.gov.za Prudence.Mudau@dhsd.limpopo.gov.za	079 491 1909 071 678 3864
Mpumalanga	Mandla Zwane Hluphi Mpangane	MandlaZw@mpuhealth.gov.za hluphim@mpuhealth.gov.za	082 229 8893 076 522 8511 / 013 766 3411
North West	Chriseldah Lebeko	clebeko@nwpg.gov.za	082 421 7985
Northern Cape	Gloria Hottie	hottieg@webmail.co.za	072 391 3345 / 053 830 0529
Western Cape	Charlene Jacobs	Charlene.Jacobs@westerncape.gov.za	072 356 5146 / 021 483 9964
Port Health and Environmental Health			
Central Region (Gauteng, Free State, Northern Cape)	Funeka Bongweni	Funeka.Bongweni@health.gov.za	012 395 9728 060 993 0107
Northern Region (Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West)	Ockert Jacobs	Ockert.Jacobs@health.gov.za	012 395 9417 082 372 0556
Coastal Region (KwaZulu-Natal, Northern Cape, Western Cape)	Antoinette Hargreaves	Antoinette.Hargreaves@health.gov.za	031 301 0381 083 460 0935

9. CONCLUSION

It is imperative that school communities are aware of the basic health and safety precautions as mentioned throughout the SOP. This SOP must be implemented immediately within all South African schools and applies to all entities and individuals that may come within the school premises.

The Department will ensure compliance as well as secure resources to protect the health of school communities.