Ministry of Education
Cayman Islands Government

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SERVICES
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

COVID-19:
Guidance for Educational Institutions

Applicable to:

Schools

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Centres

Other institutions that provide full-time or part- time education for children up to the age of 17

Updated August 29, 2022

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Adapted Public Health Guidance for LFTs and Contact Information:

ADAPTED PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDELINES FOR

LATERAL FLOW TEST RESULTS FOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

- **If the LFT result is positive**:
  - report the positive result to the Public Health Department and to the institution.
  - conduct a confirmatory PCR test and isolate for 6 days; **please note that the day of your initial positive test is considered Day 0**. You may leave isolation on Day 7 and return to your Educational Institution provided you are no longer experiencing symptoms, in particular, sneezing and fever.

- **If the LFT result is negative:**
  - you may attend your Educational Institution, observe good hand hygiene and social distancing. If you are still sneezing or coughing persistently, you are also strongly encouraged to wear a mask.
  - **if the symptoms are accompanied by fever, please remain at home until symptom free.**

NOTE:

Exit testing and isolation release letters from Public Health are no longer required to exit isolation as per Public Health Department guidance.

Public Health Department Contact Information
1-800-534-8600; 947-3077; 925-6327

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Mental Health Helpline
1-800-534-6463 (MIND)

Cayman Counseling Centre
949-8789

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SERVICES

945-1199

MULTI-AGENCY SAFEGUARDING HUB (MASH)

945-0545   MASH@gov.ky

Scenario Protocols:

Scenario 1: Current Scenario – Confirmed cases in the community

- Continue discussions with children on the utilization of protection measures.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.
- Utilise self-protection measures such as hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette (masks and social distancing are not mandatory, but encouraged, including on school buses).
- For students and staff, complete a lateral flow test if you display COVID-19 symptoms or have been in contact with anyone displaying symptoms (Be mindful that persons with COVID-19 may not display any symptoms). Follow the ***Adapted Public Health Guidelines for Lateral Flow Test Results for Educational Institutions*** found on page 1 of this document.
- Implement the ***Health and Safety Measures*** found on page 3 of this document.
- Implement the ***Remote Learning Readiness Assessment/Guidance*** listed as Appendix 1 on page 7 of this document.

Scenario 2: Suspected case in the Educational Institution

Maintain levels of cleaning and observe all protocols as outlined in Scenario 1.

Student

- Separate the student from the main student body in a secure and comfortable environment until released to the parent/guardian.
- Notify parent/guardian to collect student immediately.
- Student should be supervised at all times in line with child protection guidelines.
- Parents/guardians should conduct an LFT. If positive, notify Public Health and the Leader of the Educational Institution.
- Follow Public Health protocols for entering and exiting isolation

  To support the response and pro-active planning for Covid-19, Educational Institutions must report the number of Covid-19 positive cases either through their attendance management system for government schools, or to the following contact points for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Centres, Private Schools and Post-Secondary Institutions:

    o ECCE Centres to report the number of positive cases to the Ministry of Education through ecce@gov.ky (244-6605)
    o Private Schools and post-secondary institutions to notify the Ministry of Education through assistedschools@gov.ky (244-3151)

Staff

- Conduct an LFT. If positive, notify Public Health and the Leader of the Educational Institution.
- Follow Public Health protocols for entering and exiting isolation.

Where positives are reported, additional cleaning of high contact surfaces should be undertaken.

Scenario 3: Educational Institution closes

- Public Health to notify the Ministry of Education and Educational Institution of the need to close.
- Educational institution to:
    - notify parents and staff of closure.
    - activate completed *Remote Learning Readiness Assessment/Guidance* listed as Appendix 1 of this document.
    - await all clear from Public Health to resume normal operations.

Health and Safety Measures:

COVID-19 Vaccine

- The COVID-19 vaccine is currently available to ALL persons 5 years and older. The schedule for vaccination clinics can be found at https://www.hsa.ky/public-health/coronavirus.

Medical Health

- The COVID-19 virus most commonly causes:
    - coughing
    - fever
    - tiredness
    - breathing difficulties
    - loss of smell & taste
- These symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually but commonly occur within 1-10 days after a person has been exposed. Some people become infected but do not develop any symptoms and do not feel ill.
- **Anyone who feels unwell should complete a Lateral Flow Test and follow the guidelines outlined on page 1 of this document.**
- Parents/guardians of children/students with complex medical needs (including but not limited to underlying respiratory and cardiovascular conditions) should seek advice from the child's medical/health practitioner to support informed risk assessment and decision-making about whether on-site education is suitable.
- Parents/ guardians of students of compulsory school age (ages 5 – 17) who are out of school for an extended period, for medical reasons, should electronically submit the relevant documentation from the Health Care Provider to their educational institutions. **For child protection purposes, it is important that all students are accounted for.**

Mental Health

- Educational institutions play a key role in supporting mental health and well-being through mental health prevention and promotion. At the classroom level, this includes acknowledging the importance of supporting students to build resiliency, coping skills and knowledge that contributes to their overall well-being.
- Staff and children/students may be experiencing anxiety, higher levels of stress or general concern regarding community spread of the COVID-19 virus. Access to counsellors for staff and children/students should be provided as one method of support.

- There are a number of counselling providers available locally (e.g. Employee Assistance Programme). Institutions should provide contact information to staff and parents/guardians who may want or need to utilise these services.

Attendance

- Educational institutions must maintain updated registers of absence and ensure parents/guardians are contacted if there are unreported absences.
- The Truancy Officers at the Department of Education Services must be contacted (945-1199) if there are concerns regarding attendance at school for students ages 5 to 17.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Cleaning should be enhanced at educational institutions.
- Routine cleaning must take place throughout the day to ensure that risks of transmission are reduced for high-touch surfaces/spaces.
- Deep cleaning must be increased in high traffic areas, e.g. canteens.
- Toys, equipment and resources used by children/students must be cleaned each day.
- Regular maintenance of ventilation and air-conditioning systems should be carried out.

Social Distancing and Space Arrangements

Social distancing is encouraged to the extent permitted by the physical space limitations of the environment.

- Remind children/students and staff about respecting each other's personal space.
- Use available space to spread children/students and staff out, both in learning environments and for gatherings and events, at least 3 feet where possible.
- Rearrange classroom furniture to provide maximum space between tables.
- Rearrange seating to maximise the distance between students.
- Based on each institution's unique circumstances, snack/lunch in canteens may be scheduled on rotation to reduce the number of children/students and staff in close proximity.
- Class transition times may be staggered to provide a greater amount of space for movement for children/students and staff.
- Manage the flow of people in common areas, including hallways, bathrooms and around lockers, to minimise crowding and allow for ease of people passing through.
- Use floor markings and posters to address traffic flow throughout the school. This may include one-way hallways and designated entrance and exit doors. It is important to adhere to the fire code and have an appropriate number of exits.
- Playtime may be scheduled on rotation to reduce the number of children/students and staff in close proximity.

Transportation

- All students, age five and above, may wear masks when on the school bus/van.
- Students must be seated to allow for social distancing on the school bus/van where possible.
- Bus drivers and wardens may wear masks.
- Bus drivers, wardens and students must sanitise their hands upon boarding the school bus/van.

- **Field trips may be conducted with full observation of the protocols throughout the field trip for transportation, hand hygiene and distancing where possible.**

Hand Hygiene
- Practice diligent hand hygiene by washing hands with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Hand-washing should occur before/after breaks, eating, using the washroom, using play equipment and using frequently touched shared equipment.
- Where soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitiser should be provided in every occupied room. Staff and children/students unable to use hand sanitiser must wash their hands more regularly.
- Hand-washing supplies must be well stocked, including soap, paper towels and, where appropriate, alcohol-based hand sanitiser with a minimum of 70% alcohol.

Respiratory Etiquette
- Children/students and staff must:
    - Cough and sneeze into their elbow, sleeve, or tissue.
    - Dispose of used tissues in appropriate bins and immediately perform hand hygiene.

Routine Care
- Standard precautions should be taken when providing routine care and/or assistance (e.g. the use of gloves for nappy changing, toileting, feeding students with significant needs).
- Staff must always wash hands with soap and water or use a hand sanitiser before and after performing routine care.
- When conducting routine care, advice on whether adults should wear masks, PPE, etc., will be guided by the Public Health Department.
- Hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and environmental cleaning are important for reducing risk.

Visitor Access/Community Use of Facilities
- A system for recording persons who enter the premises throughout the day must be established.
- Information such as name, time of entry and exit, the reason for visit/who they are visiting and contact details must be collected. The need to collect this information must be clearly communicated to all stakeholders. This is to ensure that accurate information is retained for visitors to the compound.
- Reduce the number of persons on campus who are not staff (e.g. maintenance personnel). All maintenance and non-essential services must be completed when no children/students are at the facility/campus. If emergency maintenance services are necessary, all service providers who enter the centres/schools must adhere to hand hygiene protocols, optional mask wearing and social distancing.
- Reduce public use of the facilities that children/ students, especially those under age 12, will have to utilise/share. Where this cannot be avoided, cleaning protocols must be in place before children/students utilise shared equipment/space.

Drinking Water and Food Hygiene

- Children/students must bring their own water bottle for use (and refilling). Children/students must not drink directly from drinking fountains. Drinking fountains should be switched off and/or rendered inaccessible.
- The Educational Institution must manage arrangements for water bottle refills. Educational Institutions are reminded to flush all refill stations that are available to staff and children/students for up to five minutes following extended periods of non-use.
- Sharing of food should be avoided.
- Staff and children/students must keep as much distance as possible between each other when eating.
- The highest standards of hygiene must be practised in rooms. This includes:
    - Washing drink and food containers with hot water and detergent.
    - Regularly wiping down and spraying surfaces with disinfectant.

Temperature Checks

- Where necessary, if a child is presenting with flu-like symptoms, Educational Institutions should carry out temperature checks and contact parents/guardians if children/students have a fever of 37.5 °C (99.5 °F) or higher.

Work Placements

- Schools should ensure that students on work- placements or internships follow the precautionary and/or mandated health and safety guidance.

School Closures

- Educational institutions must be prepared to implement remote learning measures in the event they are required to close.

Talking About COVID-19

- Information about COVID-19 should be shared in an age-appropriate manner with children/students who ask for information.
- Staff should not "overshare" or force children/students to discuss the topic.

> ✦ **Important**
> Effective immediately.

Remote Learning Readiness Assessment & Guidance

The purpose of this guidance is to assist educational institutions with preparations should there be a need to shift from in-person learning to remote learning for some or all children/students. The following list is captured as a word document template in Appendix 1.

Child Protection
- ❑ Meet with staff to review child protection measures and ensure staff are aware of mandatory reporting measures and procedures

Children/Students with Additional Needs
- ❑ Learning and support for children/students with additional needs will vary based on the individual
- ❑ Individual educational plans should be developed, based on children's/students' specific needs in a remote learning scenario
- ❑ Options for therapy and other specialist services should be included

Learning Readiness
- ❑ Survey staff to determine what digital equity gaps exist
- ❑ Survey students and families to determine what digital equity gaps exist
- ❑ Identify steps to address digital equity gaps, such as distributing devices and setting-up mobile wireless hotspots or preparing to shift to paper-based learning (with regular distribution schedules considered)
- ❑ Identify learning platforms, online libraries and other digital tools, that will be used or video streaming platforms that all classes will use. These may be identified along year groups or grades. Schools should determine what platforms will be used to post assignments, provide updates, store contact information and learning expectations in a user friendly, organised and engaging way
- ❑ Have students practice logging into the learning platforms and navigating online resources
- ❑ Draft guidance to parents on the use of online platforms and tools that the schools will utilise should there be a need to shift to remote learning. Guidance should include how parents/carers can monitor their children's use of those programmes

Teaching and Learning
- ❑ Meet with staff to set the expectations and methods for the curriculum to be delivered
- ❑ Determine the expectations for assessment/progress monitoring
- ❑ Identify tools/methods to assess, collect and track student data and methods to record and monitor student data to inform adjustments for student-centred instruction

- Determine a simple instructional model that could be used by all teachers for remote learning. Model could be:

    Mini-lesson: A video lecture on or introduction of the material

    Collaboration: A collaborative protocol for students, such as using Zoom breakout rooms

    Work + Check: A short work time (5-10 mins) followed by a check for understanding

    Flexible work time: Students can either continue their work independently, off Zoom, or stay on with the teacher if they need more support

    Exit slip: Students complete a quick problem to gauge their mastery of the material

- Determine common expectations for teachers as it relates to their distance learning instructional practices, such as length of the school day, length of lessons, breaks to be provided, etc.
- Identify methods to provide regular, timely and consistent updates of learning objectives and outcomes to parents/carers
- Set expectations for the use of virtual learning walks to determine the successes and struggles teachers are having with the common instructional model
- Set expectations for regular online professional development to be scheduled with teachers to share advice and best practices around teaching and learning

Administration
- Confirm contact information for staff
- Confirm parent/families email addresses, phone numbers and physical addresses
- Determine what the school day will "look like, sound like, feel like" for students/families should there be a need to shift to remote learning. This should include, schedule for classes, expectations for office hours, process, etc.
- Determine process for recording and monitoring attendance
- Determine dates for regular staff meetings (weekly or bi-weekly with pre-set times)

- Determine dates for professional development sessions (e.g. monthly with pre-set times)
- Determine virtual office hours and expectations for the school – when will staff be available for contact from parents/students (e.g. 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.)
- Develop a sample remote learning schedule and expectations for staff, students, and families
- Determine what communication channels will be utilised to share key information with stakeholders (school website, social media, learning platforms)
- Determine the use of tools (website, learning platform, zoom, etc.) to collect and post video and assignment links for students

Communication
Communicate the following to parents/carers should educational institutions need to close:

- Virtual office hours
- Process for recording and monitoring attendance
- Remote learning schedules and expectations
- Tools for remote learning and for on-going communication
- Process for monitoring remote learning and reporting on student progress and achievement
- Weekly newsletters should be issued to ensure families have pertinent information on a regular basis
- Schools should publish weekly "Student Spotlight" pieces to celebrate student accomplishments and achievements

Daily Checks
- Staff attendance should be monitored daily to check in with staff and to ensure that remote learning classes are not interrupted. Plans should be in place to cover absences
- Attendance of students should be monitored daily. Child protection is critical, especially when children/students are at home and may not be able to express a need for help
- Carry out mental health checks with staff and children/students

Safeguarding Children in Remote Learning

When children aren't seeing trusted adults at school every day, it is even more important that staff are able to identify any child protection concerns and take appropriate action. If a child is experiencing abuse or neglect at home, they will most likely be more comfortable to open up over time and not through one isolated conversation.

If you have formed reasonable suspicion that a child has been or is being abused or neglected, this must be referred following the procedures for your educational institution.

What to look out for
- Sudden declines in performance, or swing in typical academic behaviour
- Changes in behaviour patterns
- The child's appearance - Does the child appear as if he/she is being cared for?
- What students may share about new "friends", new "jobs" or "new" plans when the remote learning period ends
- What a student may be revealing through their work

Note: It is important to keep in mind that students may show signs of stress that are completely due to the situation/circumstances as they are adapting to a new normal.

Supporting students and engaging in conversations
- Build in time to check-in on your students' overall health and well-being
- Acknowledge apprehension or expressions of worry/concern
- Try to avoid yes or no questions, ask questions such as:

  > What's your favourite part about being at home? What is your least favourite part?

  > What does a day look like at home for you right now?

- Host discussion boards and post questions and/ or assignments that may reveal how home life and social distancing is going
- Be mindful of who may be listening in the background
- Have conversations with students about how to safely talk about their concerns, i.e.

  > Use of safe words/phrases

  > Communicating by writing things down on paper and holding it up and showing it to you if they can't say it out loud

- Where possible, create a safe mechanism for students to reach out for support

Engage in conversation with students, parents or carers

- Ask them if they have anything that you can assist with

- Take note of any discrepancies between what a student and a parent/cares may be reporting

- Listen to how the parent/cares describes interaction with their child

- Pay attention to the background in the home

- Express appreciation and gratitude

Documentation

- Keep a log of the dates and times you speak to students and parents/cares and document any behaviour or comments that raise a red flag

- When interacting with students, track their baseline behaviours and emotions and compare them to what the student typically exhibits in the classroom at school:

    This will help you to notice any escalation in risk factors/concerns

Referring

- When patterns or concerning indicators are noticed, make the appropriate referral

- Follow protocols for welfare checks when you are unable to connect with your students

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub

Ph: 945-0545   Email: MASH@gov.ky

There was a significant reduction in the number of child safeguarding referrals to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub in 2020 when the Cayman Islands underwent sheltering in place orders. This does not mean that the number of child safeguarding incidents reduced. When children are not attending school, there is greater opportunity for them to be abused because there are less mandated reporters in contact with them. This is why it is crucial for educators to establish good relationships and communication with children and parents to be able to assess if they need supportive services or whether there is a risk that requires immediate intervention.