



Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts

Guidelines for a Safe, Healthy and Protective Learning Environment

Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts Guidance for Heads of Schools, Teachers and Parents

- Safe School Operations
- Focus On Learning
- Well-Being And Protection
- Addressing Inclusivity
- Strengthening School Contingency And Risk Reduction Planning





Guidelines for a Safe, Healthy and Protective Learning Environment

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Ministry Guidance	Heads of Schools	Teachers	Parents
	SAFE SCHOOL	OPERATIONS	
Schools will have access to clean water/ handwashing stations.	Adequate clean water/handwashing stations and soap are in place for all classrooms and the school. Handwashing stations are accessible by students with disabilities.	Check your students' access to clean water and handwashing, stations especially for young children, those with disabilities and girls. Check your own access to clean water and handwashing stations.	Ensure your child has access to soap and clean water.
Schools will have adequate cleaning supplies; are cleaned/ disinfected regularly using intensive cleaning practices.	Cleaning staff have adequate cleaning supplies. Cleaning staff apply intensive cleaning practices (including surfaces touched by many people such as railings, tables, equipment, door/window handles, toys, teaching aids, etc.). Classrooms are cleaned regularly and rubbish is removed.	Check your classroom is cleaned and sanitised regularly every day, including all high touch surfaces such as door knobs, stair rails, desks, chairs, light switches, phones, sink faucets, keyboards, teaching aids, toys and books, etc.) Staff and students should wash their hands after contact with the above areas. Special Schools will require extra care and infection prevention. Ensure that White Canes, Hearing Aids, Walkers, Mobility Devices, Work Trays, Core Boards, etc. are in good condition and cleaned frequently on behalf of the child. Any item transferred between school and home will require cleaning prior to entering and departing school each day.	If your child has any assistive devices, such as white cane, hearing aid, walker, mobility device, etc. ensure these are cleaned every day.

Ministry Guidance	Heads of Schools	Teachers	Parents
	SAFE SCHOOL	OPERATIONS	
Schools will institute physical distancing and safe hygiene practices (regular and frequent handwashing/cleaning).	 The whole school community observes physical distancing requirements: Avoiding unnecessary touching There will be no organised or competitive sports, extracurricular activities, school assemblies, concerts, excursions, and prize-giving awards ceremonies or any other special celebrations. Schools will make arrangements to cancel programmes if any are planned. Staggering start/finish/break times The whole school community practises safe hygiene (regular and frequent handwashing/cleaning) Ensure that all teachers regularly wash their hands and refrain from touching their face. Teachers should include the same behaviours in their students Heads must have internal processes to ensure appropriate disposal of all rubbish and food waste. 	 Ensure your classroom is organised (furniture/ learning resources) to enable physical distancing and as practical as possible. Educate students/children about COVID-19 prevention: Appropriate and frequent hand hygiene Good hygiene practices, such as covering coughs or sneezes with an elbow or a tissue Disposing of used tissues safely in a garbage bin Awareness of symptoms of COVID-19 Ensure, that you regularly wash your hands and refrain from touching your face. Include the same practice in your students. Develop a way to track handwashing and reward for frequent/timely handwashing (young children sing a song while washing hands to practise recommended 20 second duration). Educate your students to be aware of physical distancing and school hygiene practices (regular and frequent handwashing/cleaning). 	 Teach your child about proper (regular and frequent) handwashing behaviours: Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds Before and after eating After recess and lunch breaks After using the toilet After gardening After playing with your friends After picking up rubbish After touching or playing with your pets and animals After visiting the places o worship such as church, mosque or temple After using public transport such as bus or taxi Or after any outdoor activity such as playing contact sports (for example rugby) Encourage your child to follow school rules on physical distancing and good hygiene practices at home.

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	SAFE SCHOOL	OPERATIONS	
	Canteens should operate hygienically and care must be taken to ensure no overcrowding of students while buying at the canteen. The Heads of boarding schools should liaise with the Divisional Education Officer and the Divisional Medical Officer to ensure mandatory screening of all students before they are allowed to return to the boarding facilities from 30 June 2010. Boarding students should not be allowed to leave school premises unless approved by the Heads. If a boarding student is permitted to leave the school premises, mandatory health screening must be carried out before the student returns to the dormitory. Heads need to carefully monitor student movement. No student should be permitted into the dormitory which they are not an occupant of. Keep a record of visitors in all schools for contact tracing purposes and send weekly records of any visitor allowed into the school, and student and staff who reported sick to the Divisional Education Office.	Ensure students with disabilities are positioned for optimal learning, for example those with a hearing or visual impairment at the front of the classroom. Split children (especially relevant for Early Childhood Education (ECE)) into smaller groups to support interaction between children while limiting large group activity. NB Facemasks for students/young children are not recommended, except for wearing a clean face covering when traveling in public transport.	Talk to your child about how to stay safe in school, like keeping distance from others and staying at home when sick. NB Face masks for students/young children are not recommended, except wearing a clean face covering when traveling on public transport.

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	SAFE SCHOOL	OPERATIONS	
Schools will ensure adequate ventilation in classrooms and all other buildings.	Teachers and other staff check all spaces in the school are well ventilated, using outdoor spaces for some classroom sessions as well as for play, keeping in mind COVID-19 prevention norms.	 Check there is adequate ventilation of your classroom and other teaching spaces: Keep windows in the classroom open Utilise outdoor spaces for some sessions Make sure all students and children have dedicated time for outdoor play 	 Ensure home spaces are adequately ventilated: Keep windows in the classroom open Make sure your child has dedicated time and opportunity for outdoor play Avoid your child playing with big groups of children.
Schools will communicate new school health procedures (regular & frequent handwashing/ intensive cleaning/ adequate ventilation/ physical distancing/ waste management) to teachers, school personnel (guards, cleaners, cafeteria staff), parents and students.	New school health procedures (regular and frequent handwashing/intensive cleaning/adequate ventilation/social distancing/ waste management) are communicated to the whole school community.	 Provide information widely on hygiene and COVID-19 mitigation. Use different platforms/ modes/languages where possible: Classroom activities Face-to-face discussion Sign language, if appropriate Demonstration of handwashing Demonstration of hygiene practices Educate students and parents about new school health procedures (regular and frequent handwashing/intensive cleaning/adequate ventilation/social distancing/rubbish removal). 	Keep your child home if she or he is sick, and inform the school. Seek medical help immediately. Protect your child's health and keep him/her away from people with a cough or a fever.

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	SAFE SCHOOL	OPERATIONS	
Schools will ensure there are adequate procedures for assisting with dealing with sick students/staff. Ensure each school and ECE centre has at least one handheld thermometre and guidelines to use it. Ensure there is training conducted for all teacher on temperature measurement and record keeping.	 Adequate procedures are in place for dealing with sick students/staff including: An attendance policy of not allowing sick children or staff at school A thermometre and guidelines for use available at school A focal person within the school trained in measuring and recording temperature Measurement and recording of the temperature of any child who is feeling unwell Communication with caregivers about sick students/ staff A sick room available where sick students or staff can rest until family members can come Ensuring children who must go home are returning to a caregiver (and, to the extentpossible, to a situation where they are supervised or not at risk of abuse) Ensuring there is no panic or stigma if a child or staff member is sick 	 Heads and teachers should obtain/update active contact details, phone/physical address, primary caregiver details /emergency contact details in case of emergency. Become familiar with any new procedures for dealing with sick students/staff: Encourage children to say if they are feeling unwell. Tell them not to worry and make the environment comfortable for them to share All students in boarding schools must have routine temperature and symptoms checks. Ensure the focal point is trained in using a handheld thermometre takes the temperature of sick students and records the information Ensure there is no panic and stigma if any student is sick. Identify the temperature cut-offs for referring a sick student to health personnel. Coordinate with the health focal person for further investigation Communicate with the family on whether the child is to be referred to a health focal point and make sure the child is accompanied by a family member Make sure any child who feels unwell can rest in the sick room; the space should be safe for all Ensure children who must go home are returning to a caregiver (and, to the extent possible, to a situation where they are supervised or not at risk of abuse) Any child who is absent from school due to illness will require a medical certificate when commencing school 	If your child feels unwell at school and the school reaches out to you, please cooperate and follow the steps suggested. Inform your school of any pre-existing health conditions of your children, or if your child is immunocompromised.

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	SAFE SCHOOL	OPERATIONS	
Schools will ensure there is on-going review of the school's COVID-19 procedures and response.	 Identify a designated drop-off and pick-up area for students and ensure that students wait for their parent pickup in sheltered open spaces instead crowding in one room. On-going monitoring and evaluation of school COVID-19 procedures and response: Keeping a record of students with existing preconditions or those who are immunocompromised and of all parents' comments and suggestions Keeping a record of student and staff compliance with COVID-19 related procedures 	 Encourage children to use clean face covering when traveling in public transport Parents /guardians should not be allowed beyond the designated pick up/drop off point without prior approval. Any staff member who is not feeling well must inform the Head of school and visit the nearest medical facility. They must also wear a face covering if they have influenza-like symptoms Monitor and evaluate students' behaviours to see if change has occurred, specifically as it relates to: Personal responsibility for health matters Cleaning and disinfection activities Capacity to notice, express and address feelings Regular and frequent handwashing/intensive cleaning/ adequate ventilation/physical distancing/rubbish removal Report back to the head teacher your insights into students' behaviour with regard to COVID-19. 	Communicate and make suggestions to the school/ teachers on any problems with the school's COVID-19 procedures.
	FOCUS ON	LEARNING	
Schools will be fully supported so that they are able to plan and implement teaching taking into consideration students' learning level and are able to cover the revised curriculum.	 Teachers are fully prepared from the start of the new school period, to include: Developing formative assessment tasks to check current student learning levels Identification of where students need most support Have a practical school plan to ease children back into learning keeping in mind that children have been away from school for over two months 	Prepare for students' return by: • Identifying where students need most support	Ensure your child completes all worksheets before school reopens and submit these to school on time. Support children at home so they do not undergo stress related to their education.

Ministry Guidance	Heads of Schools	Teachers	Parents		
	FOCUS ON LEARNING				
Schools will adapt/modify the curriculum to cover key concepts in the time left of the school year.	 Revised syllabus should be used and this should be reflected in the remarks column of the existing LTPs. All levels other than years 12 and 13 should complete their curriculum before 16 November and classroombased assessment should be completed before 27 November 2020. This will allow examination classes (Y12 & Y13) and additional week of revision. Ensure guidance and technical support is available to teachers to frame lesson plans and teaching strategies based on the assessment of worksheets. Support students so they do not undergo stress related to their education. Prioritise provision of teaching and learning materials. There should be no extra classes. Materials for students should be simplified for ease of understanding. 	Develop lesson plans and teaching strategies for the class that cover key curriculum concepts to fit in the time left of the school year in a well-paced manner. Adapt the curriculum and use creative and playful learning experiences on the pandemic situation (e.g. projects building on children's experiences; imaginary play to help children cope with stress and promote resilience; teachable moments to help children learn about their role in ensuring public health). For young children, consider adapting the curriculum for delivery outdoors – for example using outdoor equipment and nature as materials (conducting circle time outdoors, learning about nature, etc.) and enhancing learning experiences with outdoor physical activity (gross motor play, dance, sport, etc.).	Become familiar with class lesson planning and, based on this, support children in their learning. There will be no extra classes Materials for students will be simplified for ease of understanding.		
Schools will ensure all students are prepared to begin learning on return to school, and are supported in their learning.	Ensure that your school has a practical plan to ease children back into learning, keeping in mind that they have been away from school for over two months. Teachers have developed a clear roadmap for each class based on the curriculum to be completed in the remainder of the school year, incorporating the learning needs of students with disabilities.	 Discuss being back at school, and student learning during school closure, through class activities that cover: Students' thoughts about returning to school – to mitigate fears about their learning progress Children's experiences in completing schoolwork when schools were closed – in whatever way they feel most comfortable Students' access to worksheets and other resources during the school closure period Students' progress with worksheets and other resources. 	Talk to your child about going back to school Discuss what changes they should expect. Discuss any fears that your child may have about returning to school. Check for changes to teaching/ learning arrangements (amended times, revised exam dates) as a result of the shorter school year.		

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	FOCUS ON	LEARNING	
	Review meetings are convened with teachers to jointly identify challenges and gaps and to develop key strategies to address these. Ensure teachers make arrangements to boost student	Discuss the school 'learning roadmap' (or modified/adapted curriculum) for the rest of the year. This may include some amended times and revised exam dates. Follow up on students' work with distance	Check for extension materials or booster classes to support your child's learning, particularly with literacy and numerac. Check for extension materials
	literacy and numeracy, and increase learning support. As a Head of School become the catalyst of meaningful learning and motivate teachers to be punctual to school.	materials by going through worksheets (in an open book style) to ascertain their level of engagement. Provide extension materials or booster classes to students who need learning support, particularly with literacy and numeracy.	or booster classes to support your child's learning, particularly with literacy and numeracy.
	WELL-BEING AN	D PROTECTION	
Schools will ensure an effective follow-up on students who have not returned to school.	Systems are in place to check on students who have not returned to school, including those with a disability.	Check return-to-school class numbers and follow up where necessary with parents and the district education officer/referral services. Heads should maintain records of absenteeism and offer to refer the child to the health team, health centre, hospital or provide lesson notes for remote and/or home learning.	Ensure your child is ready to attend school from Day 1 of reopening. If your child is unwell they should not be sent to school, they should visit a medical centre and get a health certificate, which should be presented to on return to school.

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	WELL-BEING AN	D PROTECTION	
Schools will be provided (by the ministry) with information about any new referral systems including services for Gender Based Violence or Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse or Child Protection or Mental Health and Psychosocial Support or Sexual and Reproductive Health.	 Teachers are encouraged to share the below messages with colleagues who are distressed: It is OK to feel sad, worried, confused, scared or angry sometimes Always show kindness to others; do not make fun of others Encourage general health and well-being of all staff with emphasis on proper diet and exercise. Students who may have lost their textbooks, exercise books, stationary and uniforms during the extended break must not be humiliated, but dealt with in a sensitive and practical manner. Positive reinforcement and motivation should be practised at all times. Support teachers to focus on the students' learning and wellbeing and make sure their time is not spent on any other commitments. Staff meetings should be limited to discussing pertinent issues only. Make sure there is no discrimination or discouraging remarks made to teachers who worked from home during the extended school break. Provide psychological and emotional support to children who would be facing difficulties easing into classroom-based learning 	 Emphasise behavioural changes for students so as to Increase personal responsibility for health matters Increase cleaning and disinfection activities Ensure effective waste management Increase their capacities to notice, express and address feelings Provide honest and direct understandable information to ECE children using simple words and positive messages so they feel confident that all will be OK. Share the below messages with students and children if they are distressed (either about returning to school or about unsafe situations at home): It is OK to feel sad, worried, confused, scared or angry sometimes It is OK to share your feelings; do not keep them bottled up inside of you Always show kindness to others; do not make fun of others Create a safe space that will encourage students to openly discuss any issues they may be facing at home. 	 Encourage your child to change behaviour so he/she: Increases personal responsibility for health matters Increases cleaning activities Increases his/her skills to notice, express and address feelings Encourage your child to share their concerns, questions or feelings. Provide honest and direct understandable information to your child, using simple words and positive messages, so they feel confident that all will be OK. Monitor your child's exposure to internet and media and ensure he/she is protected from content or users that place them at risk.

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	WELL-BEING AN	D PROTECTION	
	Many families will be facing hardship due to prevailing economic situation and therefore Heads and teachers are to be extra vigilant and conscious of students' mental and physical health and wellbeing. Students will take time to readjust and should not be penalised for slow progress in learning. All worksheets and any other resources disseminated through online platform during the extended closure are not to be used as a basis for assessment when students return to school. These were supplementary resources to keep students occupied during the extended break only.	 Ensure an inclusive environment for the whole school community so there is no teasing, discrimination or difference of treatment in relation to COVID-19 among students, teachers and school staff. Discuss well-being issues through class activities that cover: Children's concerns/expression of feelings on COVID-19 Class understandings of COVID-19 Basic concepts of risk mitigation such as social distancing/regular and frequent handwashing/ covering coughs or sneezes with an elbow or a tissue Students' personal control of health (routines/ prevention/observation) Practical health demonstrations/role plays/ scenario discussion (i.e. what do you do if?) Model ways for students to calm themselves and promote self-help 	Monitor your child's well- being and reactions to stress and seek help from a teacher, public health centre or other support service if needed. Monitor your own well- being and reactions to stress and seek help from a teacher, public health centre or other support service for assistance if needed. Help your child stay connected with friends and relatives. Teach your child to be careful about rumours, and to think before sharing incorrect information or accepting the rumours as truth.

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	ADDRESSING INCLUSIVITY					
Schools will be provided (by the ministry) with any new protocols for services for vulnerable students (including those children in need of care and protection) and students with disabilities.	Become familiar with any new protocols for services for vulnerable students (including those in need of care and protection) and students with disabilities. In case of special and inclusive schools, parents/ guardians accompanying their child within school/ classroom must receive prior approval from the Heads and all infection protocols must be followed and minimum contact should be maintained with other students and staff.	Ensure teaching methodologies and learning materials/platforms, information, services and facilities are accessible by students with disabilities. Refer children in need of care and protection to the Ministry of Women, Children & Poverty Alleviation, the Ministry of Health and Medical Services or other services available in the Disability Referral Directory (including for children who have been absent/ not returned to school). Follow up on attendance of students with disabilities and other vulnerable students who have not returned to school. Check accessibility to water, hygiene and sanitation services for students with disabilities. Review the particular learning needs of vulnerable students (including those in need of care and protection) and those with disabilities. Ensure hygiene and COVID-19 mitigation strategies are accessible by all, including deaf students and those with vision, intellectual and behavioural impairments.	Check support for disabled children; if you are not sure how to support them, reach out to a teacher, social welfare officer or health worker. If your child attends a special or inclusive school and you need to accompany your child within school/classroom, you must receive prior approval from the Head of school and follow all infection protocols with minimum contact with other students and staff.			
Schools will ensure an inclusive environment so there is no teasing, discrimination or difference of treatment in relation to COVID-19 amongst students, teachers and school staff.	Facilitate an inclusive environment for the whole school community so there is no teasing, discrimination or difference of treatment in relation to COVID-19 among students, teachers and school staff.	Ensure there is no teasing, discrimination or difference of treatment in your classroom in relation to COVID-19 among students, teachers and school staff.	Ensure there is no teasing, discrimination or difference of treatment in your family/ community (if possible) in relation to COVID-19.			

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STRENC	Refrain from making disparaging remarks to teachers who worked from home during the extended school break. Assist teachers to focus on the students and not make unnecessary demands on their time. Teachers should not be pressured to report on anything outside their KPIs and staff meetings should be limited to discussing only pertinent issues.	Students who may have lost their textbooks, exercise books, stationary and uniforms during the extended break must not be humiliated but dealt with in a sensitive and practical manner.	ANNING
Schools will prepare Contingency Risk Reduction Plan in line with COVID-19 school reopening guidelines (Health Epidemic, inclusive of mental health and psychosocial support components), Education in Emergencies and	Prepare, implement and monitor School Contingency Risk Reduction Plan in line with COVID-19 school reopening guidelines (Health Epidemic, inclusive of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MPHSS) components), Education in Emergencies and School Safety Policy and WASH Policy. Coordinate with teachers, school personnel, students and parents on school preparedness and response activities on COVID-19 guidelines.	Participate in developing the School Contingency and Risk reduction Plan in line with COVID-19 guidelines (Health Epidemic, inclusive of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) components), Education in Emergencies and School Safety Policy and WASH Policy. Participate and guide students in implementation and monitoring of the School Contingeny Plan.	Support schools in the development of school contingency and risk reduction plan. Familiarise yourself with the school contingency and risk reduction plan.

emergency.

emergency.

Obtain and update active contact details phone/ physical address/primary caregiver details/emergency

contact details in case of emergencies.

Help students develop confidence in their ability to care for themselves and others in times of

Provide leadership and guidance on activities for students before, during and after a period of

Communicate to parents the contingency and risk reduction plan of the school.

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School Safety Policy and

WASH Policy.

Ministry Guidance	Heads of Schools	Teachers	Parents
STRENGTHENING SCHOOL CONTINGENCY AND RISK REDUCTION PLANNING			
Schools must have emergency school closure plans in place. Schools must promote downloading of the CareFIJI app and activating Bluetooth on the mobile at all times.	Communicate and keep parents informed of implementation of School Contingency Plan. Supervise periodic safety and health checks and an audit of school infrastructure, WASH facilities and cleaning equipment. Ensure staff and parents download the CareFIJI app and activate Bluetooth on the mobile at all times.	 Participate in developing the School Contingency and Risk reduction Plan in line with COVID-19 guidelines (Health Epidemic, inclusive of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) components), Education in Emergencies and School Safety Policy and WASH Policy. Participate and guide students in implementation and monitoring of the School Contingeny Plan. Help students develop confidence in their ability to care for themselves and others in times of emergency. Provide leadership and guidance on activities for students before, during and after a period of emergency. Communicate to parents the contingency and risk reduction plan of the school. 	Support schools in the development of school contingency and risk reduction plan. Familiarise yourself with the school contingency and risk reduction plan. Parents must download the CareFIJI app and activate Bluetooth on the mobile at all times.