



This document outlines, in simple terms, what to expect when returning to school during the COVID-19 pandemic. It details the roles and responsibilities of different actors within the basic education sector.

COVID-19 DISASTER SCHOOL SAFETY GUIDING PRINCIPLES

FOR LEARNERS,
CAREGIVERS,
EDUCATORS AND
SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

The following principles are based off two documents from the Department of Basic Education (DBE):

- Standard Operating Procedures for COVID-19, and
- Guidelines for Schools on Maintaining Hygiene



If you are a learner, caregiver or school staff member, explore the principles set out below. If you don't think your school complies to these principles and is therefore unprepared to be reopened safely, contact us on these details:

GENERAL PRINCIPLES (1)

The following principles are drawn from the Standard Operating Procedures, which are mandatory. For more detailed guidelines, you can check out the [WHO](#) and the [College of Medicines SA](#).

HAND WASHING

Hand washing is the first golden rule of hygiene. Wash or sanitise hands:

- When entering or leaving the school
- When entering or leaving classrooms
- Before eating or handling food
- After caring for the sick
- After touching surfaces (like door knobs, railings, tables, and other frequently touched surfaces)
- After visiting the toilet (WASH hands, using hand sanitiser is insufficient)

HOW TO WASH HANDS:



- Wet hands and apply soap
- Rub palms together
- Rub soap between hands, fingers, thumbs, wrists
- Clean under nails
- Rinse hands
- Dry hands with a paper towel or allow hands to air dry (DO NOT use a cloth towel or share paper towels)

HOW TO SANITISE HANDS:



- Apply sanitiser (with at least 60% alcohol base) to palm of hand
- It should be enough sanitiser to make around the size of a R1 or R2 coin
- Rub the sanitiser between the palms of your hands and between fingers
- Do this for at least 20 seconds, until hands are dry
- If using gloves, sanitise before and after using the gloves but do not put sanitiser on the gloves directly.

Every classroom, office, bathroom, entrance or exit must have a handwashing/sanitising station near to it.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Before and after putting on any form of PPE, you must wash your hands carefully. This prevents cross contamination. PPE alone does not stop the spread of COVID-19: you must also wash hands regularly, try not to touch your face and dirty surfaces, and ensure that social distancing measures are respected. Schools are required to give each learner and staff member two cloth masks.

Every learner, staff member and visitor **must wear a cloth mask** at school, on scholar transport, and in hostels, at all times.



PUTTING ON A MASK

- Check the mask for tears or holes. If there is a hole, this mask is no longer functional.
- Make sure the proper side of the mask faces outward.
- Place the mask on your face, ensuring it covers your nose, mouth and chin.
- Secure the straps/elastic loops behind the ears snugly.
- Masks must be washed and ironed after each day. In other words, do not wear a mask for multiple days in a row: alternate masks while old ones are being cleaned.

Food handlers must wear:

- protective headgear (like visors),
- masks, and
- closed shoes.

It is recommended that cleaners have access to the following PPE:

- disposable plastic aprons,
- face masks,
- protective eye gear like goggles,
- heavy duty gloves that go up to the elbow, and closed shoes.

If you don't think your school complies to these principles and is therefore unprepared to be reopened safely, contact us on 067 419 6841 or 060 754 0751.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES (2)

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

COVID-19 spreads through **droplets** of an infected person's saliva. These droplets can survive on surfaces for different amounts of time, and therefore surfaces need to be cleaned and disinfected regularly. If they are not cleaned and disinfected regularly, anyone who touches them might be at risk.

Routine cleaning can be done with regular **detergents**, and you should follow the instructions on its packaging. **Disinfectant** kills more germs, and must be done in addition to regular cleaning. Use alcohol based solutions with at least **70% alcohol** which have been approved by SABS. Recommended products for disinfection include:

- sodium hypochlorite 0.5% (biocide sachets)
- bleach mixture of 250ml of bleach to 5 litres of water
- Surfaces must be wiped down in-between daily cleaning with at least 70% ethyl alcohol cleaner.

CLEANING FREQUENTLY TOUCHED SURFACES

Surfaces and classrooms must be cleaned daily.

- Clean and disinfect classrooms at least **twice** a day.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces (like doorknobs, railings, desks, light switches), including those in bathrooms, **hourly**.
- All surfaces in bathrooms must be wiped down **twice** daily using a disinfectant cleaner.
- Collect all bin bags with potentially contaminated waste from classrooms and offices, and dispose of safely **daily**
 - To dispose of rubbish, 'double-bag' the rubbish and leave in a specific, demarcated rubbish area.

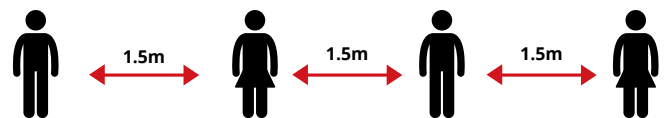
CLEANING MINIMALLY TOUCHED SURFACES

These surfaces include floors, walls, blinds, ceilings etc.

- To clean these surfaces, you should use a detergent solution or detergent wipes.
- Damp mopping is better than dry mopping.
- Clean walls and blinds when visibly dirty.
- Change curtains regularly and clean when visibly dirty.
- Clean sinks and basins regularly.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

Always try keep **1.5 metres** between you and other people. This social distancing must be adhered to both inside and outside of the classroom.



Extra-mural activities such as contact sports, assemblies and hall gatherings are not allowed.

Queuing for food at either tuckshops or for school nutrition programme meals is discouraged. It is recommended that learners eat their lunch in classrooms, where they can be supervised by staff.

Each school must have an **isolation** room where persons showing COVID-19 symptoms can be isolated until they are tested.

Schools facilities, including school halls, are not allowed to be used for funerals or other public gatherings during this period. This is to avoid contamination of the school premises.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES (3)

SCREENING

Every person entering the school premises must be screened every day.

The person conducting screening must wear a face mask and wash their hands regularly.

While waiting to be screened to be admitted into the school, social distancing must be observed.

Screening has three potential phases: a questionnaire, a temperature check and a travel/contact history.

Questionnaire

This asks about any potential symptoms or health problems that you might have. Example questions include:

- Do you have a high temperature?
- Do you have a cough?
- Do you have a sore throat?
- Do you have difficulty breathing (shortness of breath)?
- Do you feel weak and tired today?
- Can you taste food and drinks normally?
- Can you smell normally?

If you answered **'no'** to all of these questions, you are allowed to enter the school for a temperature check.

If you answered **'yes'** to any of these questions, you will need to have your temperature checked and you will become a "person under investigation". See next:

Temperature Check

Here, your temperature will be taken with an infra-red thermometer.

- If your temperature is higher than 38°C, you may have a fever.
- If you have a fever, you are considered a "person under investigation" (PUI) and will have to be isolated and referred to the health officials in your area.

The following principles must be respected at all times by everyone in the school community:

Travel history

Here, you will be asked to answer if you have:

- Travelled outside of South Africa to a country with lots of coronavirus, or worked somewhere where there are a lot of international travellers
- Travelled within South Africa to an area with local transmissions: Gauteng, Western Cape, KwaZulu Natal, Free state, Eastern Cape
- Had close contact with someone who is suspected to have COVID-19 or has been diagnosed positive with COVID-19
- Attended/Visited/Worked at a healthcare facility that has treated patients with COVID-19

If the answer to any of these questions is 'yes', you will become a PUI and will be referred for testing and isolation.

ISOLATION ROOMS

Every school must have an 'isolation room' where people who have been screened and show potential symptoms of COVID-19 can be isolated temporarily.

The learner, educator or visitor must be supplied with a mask if they don't already have one and told to wait in the isolation area.

- Parents of the learner must be contacted to collect the child and take them for further testing by a health professional.

The principal of the school must contact the local clinic/hospital and notify the school's contact person with the Department of Health of the potential case. The healthcare facility must prepare for their arrival for testing. The principal must also report a suspected case of COVID-19 in an employee to the DPSA.

A person under investigation/PUI must follow all protocols from the Department of Health!

If you don't think your school complies to these principles and is therefore unprepared to be reopened safely, contact us on 067 419 6841 or 060 754 0751.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES (4)

CLASSROOMS

Efforts must be made to **reduce class sizes** so that social distancing of 1.5m can be observed.

Every classroom must have a **hand washing or sanitiser station** at the door. Communal water bowls are not recommended: you can make a 'tippy tap' by following the instructions [here](#).

- Learners and educators must wash/sanitise their hands before entering or leaving the classroom.
- Each classroom should have paper towels for hand drying. Shared towels are not recommended.
- Each classroom should have a litter bin with a lid and bin-bags in which waste can be thrown away.

Desks or tables must be spread out across the classroom - 1.5m must separate each desk.

- It is recommended that desks should not be shared.

Classrooms must be well **ventilated**. It's recommended windows are left open.

Masks are to be worn in classrooms at all times.

TOILETS/BATHROOMS



There must be hand washing stations within **5m** of every toilet.

- Sanitiser is not recommended for use after the toilet - it is not strong enough.
- Everyone must wash their hands carefully for 20 seconds with soap and water after using the toilet.

Frequently touched surfaces, including those in bathrooms, must be disinfected hourly.

- All surfaces in the bathroom must be wiped down twice daily using a disinfectant.

HOSTELS

Hostels must comply with all of the above rules. The following rules should apply too:

- Everyone in hostels must wear a mask at all times.
- At all entrances, exits, dining halls and study rooms, sanitizers/water and soap must be available.
- Hostels must be regularly disinfected, paying particular attention to frequently touched surfaces and rooms with high traffic of people.
- Learners must bath every day with warm water and soap.
- Learners must wear shoes everywhere in the hostel, including to the bathrooms.
- Schools must have infra-red thermometers to screen hostel learners and staff.
- Hostel staff must be trained on COVID-19.
- Hostel staff must wear personal protective equipment when on duty.
- Beds must be positioned 1.5-2m apart from each other.
- In general, physical distancing of 1.5-2m should be observed, including in dining halls and libraries.
 - Library and dining hall use must be supervised by staff to ensure physical distancing.
- Meat and eggs must be very well cooked.
- Meals must be prepared with strict compliance to health and hygiene rules.
- Food handlers must sanitise their hands, surfaces and utensils regularly.
- No sharing of beds, food utensils, cups, bottles, stationery or any other items is allowed.
- No visits to other boarders' rooms are allowed.
- If a boarder, teacher or hostel staff member feels unwell they should self isolate immediately and inform the health department.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES (5)

The following principles must be respected at all times by everyone in the school community:

SCHOLAR TRANSPORT

All scholar transport must abide by the following loading **capacity regulations** [1]:

- Busses - not more than 50% of licensed capacity
- Taxis - not more than 70% of licensed capacity
- Private vehicles - not more than 60% of licensed capacity



50%



70%



60%

[1]: These capacity limits are taken from the Disaster Management Act Regulations 11C as amended. However, please note that the Guidelines for Schools on Maintaining School Hygiene differs on taxis - they require that taxis also not go above 50% of the licensed capacity.

Using scholar transport:

- The vehicle driver and learners must wear masks.
- When you get onto the bus/taxi/transport, sanitise your hands with 60% alcohol based sanitiser.
- Do not sit next to a friend - there must be at least 1.5m between you and the next person.
- When you get off the bus/taxi/transport, sanitise your hands again.
- Drivers must sanitise their hands when entering or disembarking the vehicle.

Transport operators and drivers:

- must clean and disinfect their vehicles before and after transporting learners, especially the door and window handles, armrests and handrails.
- Transport operators must also install hand sanitisers with a minimum of 60% alcohol content at the door of the vehicle.

NATIONAL SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMME

On 26 May 2020 at a meeting with the National Education Collaboration Trust, the DBE stated that from 1 June 2020, all learners would again be fed under the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), including those who have not yet returned to school.

- Each Province must develop the best mechanism for collection or delivery of meals or food parcels to learners.

Additional hygiene measures are required for food safety and the prevention of the spread of COVID-19. These measures apply in addition to the general guidelines for schools, food storage and preparation for the NSNP.

Volunteer Food Handlers must:

- Wash their hands thoroughly before handling food.
- Wear closed shoes.
- Wear face masks, headgear and disposable aprons.

Cleaning:

- All **surfaces** and **utensils** must be disinfected daily.
 - It is recommended that either sodium hypochlorite 0.5% (biocide sachets) or a bleach mixture of 250ml of bleach to 5 litres of water is used for this.
- Surfaces and utensils must be wiped down in-between daily cleaning after use/touch, with at least 70% ethyl alcohol cleaner.
- Food must be prepared carefully.

Learners must eat meals in classrooms under the supervision of an educator.

Schools should consider implementing staggered serving times to prevent queuing.