

## Staying Home If Unwell Policy (Staff)

### Purpose

This interim guidance may help prevent workplace exposures to COVID-19 in non-healthcare settings. DHA has also provided guidance for school staff who may have had exposure to a person known or suspected to have COVID-19.

### Role of the school in Responding to COVID-19

Schools can prevent and slow the spread of COVID-19 within the workplace. Schools should respond in a way that takes into account the level of disease transmission in their communities and revise their response plans as needed. Operational decisions should be based on both the level of disease transmission in the community and your readiness to protect the safety and health of your employees and students.

Schools are encouraged to coordinate with DHA & KHDA officials to obtain timely and accurate information to inform appropriate responses. Local conditions will influence the decisions that government health officials make regarding community-level strategies.

As a school, if operations were interrupted, resuming distance learning presents an opportunity to update your COVID-19 preparedness, response, and control plans. Schools should implement and update as necessary a plan that:

- ✓ **Is specific to your workplace**
- ✓ **Identifies all areas and job tasks with potential exposures to COVID-19**
- ✓ **Includes control measures to eliminate or reduce such exposures.**

All schools need to consider how best to decrease the spread of COVID-19 and lower the impact in your workplace. This should include activities to:

- ✓ **prevent and reduce transmission among staff,**
- ✓ **maintain healthy business operations**
- ✓ **maintain a healthy work environment.**

### Prevent and Reduce Transmission among Staffs

Monitor DHA/KHDA/DM communications about COVID-19 regulations, guidance, and recommendations and ensure that staff have access to that information.

### Actively encourage sick employees to stay home:

- ✓ Staff who have symptoms should notify the Principal and stay home. The staff will need to consult a physician and have a proper assessment if PCR test is needed. If PCR Test is not recommended by physician, a medical certificate should be provided with the diagnosis and the length of sick leave. In any circumstance, symptomatic staff is not allowed to come back even if with medical certificate.
- ✓ Staff who tested positive should not return to work until the criteria to discontinue home isolation are met, in consultation with healthcare providers. A negative PCR Test should be provided after the completion of 14 days home quarantine.
- ✓ Staff who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should also be home quarantined for 14 days & should notify the Principal and follow DHA recommended precautions.

**Conduct a daily in-person or virtual health checks (e.g., temperature screening) of staffs before they enter the school facility.**

- ✓ Temperature screening should be conducted safely and respectfully.
- ✓ School should use social distancing, barrier or partition controls, or personal protective equipment (PPE).
- ✓ Complete the health checks in a way that helps maintain social distancing guidelines, such as providing multiple screening entries into the building.
- ✓ To prevent stigma and discrimination in the workplace, make staff health screenings as discreet as possible. Do not make determinations of risk based on race or country of origin and be sure to maintain confidentiality of each individual's medical status and history.

**Identify where and how workers might be exposed to COVID-19 at work.** - School is responsible for providing a safe and healthy workplace. Conduct a thorough risk assessment of the workplace to identify potential workplace hazards related to COVID-19. Use appropriate combinations of controls from the hierarchy of controls to limit the spread of COVID-19, including engineering controls, workplace administrative policies, and personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect workers from the identified hazards.

- ✓ Conduct a thorough risk assessment to determine if workplace hazards are present, or are likely to be present, and determine what type of controls or PPE are needed for specific job duties.
- ✓ Face mask is mandatory in school unless supported with medical condition. In such case, any staff who is exempted to wear face mask must provide a medical certificate from their Physician.
  - DHA recommends wearing a surgical/cloth face covering as a measure to contain the wearer's respiratory droplets and help protect their co-workers and members of the general public.
  - Cloth face coverings are not considered PPE. They may prevent workers, including those who don't know they have the virus, from spreading it to others but may not protect the wearers from exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19.
- ✓ Remind employees that wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain, especially in areas of significant community-based transmission. Wearing a cloth face covering, however, does not replace the need to practice social distancing.

**Separate symptomatic staff**

- ✓ Staff who appear to have symptoms upon arrival at work or who become sick during the day should immediately be separated from other staff & students and should be sent home. Staff can stay in isolation room or immediately go home and consult a doctor.
- ✓ Staff who are driving can drive themselves to a clinic or hospital provided that symptoms are mild to none.
- ✓ For staff with moderate to severe symptoms (lethargy & SOB) must be transported to a hospital via ambulance.

**Take action if a staff is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 infection**

In most cases, schools do not need to shut down the facility. Close contact tracing will be done by school management and DHA. Only those who are close contacts will be home quarantined for 14 days and distance learning will resume for those students.

- ✓ The classroom with confirmed case should be closed and lock for 24 hours. Wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting to minimize potential for other employees being exposed to respiratory droplets. If waiting 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
- ✓ During this waiting period, open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in these areas.

- ✓ Continue routinely cleaning and disinfecting all high-touch surfaces in the facility.

Cleaning and disinfection recommendations:

1. Clean dirty surfaces with soap and water before disinfecting them.
2. To disinfect surfaces, use Dubai Municipality approved disinfectants against SARS-Cov-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, and are appropriate for the surface.
3. Always wear gloves and gowns appropriate for the chemicals being used when you are cleaning and disinfecting.
4. Wear additional PPE (Face shield & Coverall) for added protection.

**Determine which employees may have been exposed to the virus and may need to take additional precautions**

- ✓ Inform employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality
- ✓ Most workplaces should follow the KHDA / DHA Recommendations for Community-Related Exposure and instruct potentially exposed staff to stay home for 14 days, telework if possible, and self-monitor for symptoms.

**Educate staff about steps they can take to protect themselves at work and at home**

- ✓ Encourage employees to follow any new policies or procedures related to illness, cleaning and disinfecting, and work meetings and travel.
- ✓ Advise employees to:
  - Stay home if they are sick, except to get medical care, and to learn what to do if they are sick.
  - Inform the Principal if they have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 and to learn what to do if someone in their home is sick.
  - Wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or to use hand sanitiser with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available. Inform employees that if their hands are visibly dirty, they should use soap and water over hand sanitiser. Key times for employees to clean their hands include:
    - Before and after work shifts
    - Before and after work breaks
    - After blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing
    - After using the restroom
    - Before eating or preparing food
    - After putting on, touching, or removing cloth face coverings
  - Avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
  - Cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or use the inside of their elbow. Throw used tissues into no-touch trash cans and immediately wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitiser containing at least 60% alcohol.
  - Practice routine cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched objects and surfaces such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, and doorknobs.
  - Avoid using other employees' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible. Clean and disinfect them before and after use.
  - Practice social distancing by avoiding large gatherings and maintaining distance (at least 6 feet) from others when possible.

**Identify a workplace coordinator who will be responsible for COVID-19 issues and their impact at the workplace.**

**Implement flexible sick leave and supportive policies and practices:**

- ✓ Ensure that sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with Ministry of Labour guidance and that employees are aware of and understand these policies.
- ✓ Maintain flexible policies that permit employees to stay home to care for a sick family member or take care of children due to school and childcare closures. Additional flexibilities might include giving advances on future sick leave and allowing employees to donate sick leave to each other.
- ✓ Employers are permitted to require a doctor's note from employees to verify that they are healthy and able to return to work.

**Protect employees at higher risk for severe illness through supportive policies and practices.**

Older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

- ✓ Support and encourage options to telework, if available.
- ✓ Consider offering vulnerable workers duties that minimize their contact with students and other employees, if the worker agrees to this.
- ✓ Offer flexible options such as telework to employees. This will eliminate the need for employees living in higher transmission areas to travel to workplaces in lower transmission areas and vice versa.

Communicate supportive workplace policies clearly, frequently, and via multiple methods. Employers may need to communicate with non-English speakers in their preferred languages.

- ✓ Train workers on how implementing any new policies to reduce the spread of COVID-19 may affect existing health and safety practices.
- ✓ Communicate to any contractors or on-site cleaners about changes that have been made to help control the spread of COVID-19. Ensure that they have the information and capability to comply with those policies.
- ✓ Create and test communication systems that employees can use to self-report if they are sick and that you can use to notify employees of exposures and closures.

**Determine how you will operate if absenteeism spikes from increases in sick employees.**

- ✓ Plan to monitor and respond to absenteeism at the workplace.
- ✓ Implement plans to continue your essential business functions in case you experience higher-than-usual absenteeism.
- ✓ Prepare to institute flexible workplace and leave policies.
- ✓ Cross-train employees to perform essential functions so the workplace can operate even if key employees are absent.

**Establish policies and practices for social distancing.** Alter your workspace to help staff and students maintain social distancing and physically separate staff from each other and from students, when possible. Here are some strategies that schools can use:

- ✓ Implement flexible worksites (e.g., telework).
- ✓ Implement flexible work hours (e.g., rotate or stagger shifts to limit the number of employees in the workplace at the same time).
- ✓ Increase physical space between employees at the worksite by modifying the workspace.
- ✓ Increase physical space between staff and students
- ✓ Use signs, tape marks, or other visual cues such as decals or coloured tape on the floor, placed 6 feet apart, to indicate where to stand when physical barriers are not possible.
- ✓ Close or limit access to common areas where employees are likely to congregate and interact.

- ✓ Prohibit handshaking.
- ✓ Deliver services remotely (e.g., phone, video, or web).
- ✓ Move the electronic payment terminal/credit card reader farther away from the accountant, if possible, to increase the distance between the customer and the accountant.

Give staff & students what they need to clean their hands and cover their coughs and sneezes:

- ✓ Provide tissues and no-touch trash cans.
- ✓ Provide soap and water in the workplace. If soap and water are not readily available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol. Ensure that adequate supplies are maintained.
- ✓ Place touchless hand sanitizer stations in multiple locations to encourage hand hygiene.
- ✓ Place posters that encourage hand hygiene to help stop the spread at the entrance to your workplace and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen.
- ✓ Discourage handshaking. Encourage employees to use other noncontact methods of greeting.

**Perform routine cleaning:**

- ✓ Routinely clean all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, handrails, and doorknobs.
- ✓ If surfaces are dirty, clean them using a detergent or soap and water before you disinfect them.
- ✓ For disinfection, Dubai Municipality approved disinfectants should be effective. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method, and contact time).
- ✓ Discourage workers from using each other's phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible.
- ✓ Provide disposable disinfecting wipes so that employees can wipe down commonly used surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks, other work tools and equipment) before each use.
- ✓ Store and use disinfectants in a responsible and appropriate manner according to the label.
- ✓ Do not mix bleach or other cleaning and disinfection products together. This can cause fumes that could be very dangerous to breathe in.
- ✓ Advise employees to always wear gloves appropriate for the chemicals being used when they are cleaning and disinfecting and that they may need additional PPE based on the setting and product.
- ✓ Perform enhanced cleaning and disinfection after persons suspected/confirmed to have COVID-19 have been in the facility:

**Limit travel and advise employees if they must travel to take additional precautions and preparations:**

- ✓ Minimize non-essential travel and consider resuming non-essential travel in accordance with Dubai regulations and guidance.
- ✓ Check the GDRFA latest guidance and recommendations for each country where you will travel. Specific travel information for travelers going to and returning from countries with travel advisories, and information for aircrew, can be found on the CDC website.
- ✓ Advise employees to check themselves for symptoms of COVID-19 before starting travel and to notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick.
- ✓ Ensure employees who become sick while traveling or on temporary assignment understand that they should notify their Principal and promptly call a healthcare provider for advice if needed.

**Minimize risk to employees when planning meetings and gatherings:**

- ✓ Use videoconferencing or teleconferencing when possible for work-related meetings and gatherings.
- ✓ Cancel, adjust, or postpone large work-related meetings or gatherings that can only occur in-person in accordance with state and local regulations and guidance.
- ✓ When videoconferencing or teleconferencing is not possible, hold meetings in open, well-ventilated spaces continuing to maintain a distance of 6 feet apart and wear cloth face coverings.

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**Reviewed by:** \_\_\_\_\_

**May Ann Angeles, DHA-RN  
Lead School Nurse**

**Approved By:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Zara Harrington  
Principal**