



# Ministry of Education & Training Government of Vanuatu



## Safe School Reopening Guidelines

May 2022



# Safe School Reopening Guidelines

These guidelines have been developed by the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) in collaboration with The Ministry of health (MoH).

COVID-19 – is a highly infectious respiratory illness that is transmitted via:

- Respiratory aerosols (droplets) through talking, breathing, coughing, sneezing, and singing.
- Direct contact or close contact for an extended period of time with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, particularly in settings such as classrooms, households and closed environments.
- Indirect contact which occurs when individuals come into contact with objects and surfaces which have been contaminated by a person infected with COVID-19.
- The measures outlined in this Guideline are critical to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in schools.

School closures due to the COVID-19 Pandemic have clear negative impacts on child health, education and development, family income and the overall economy. The government's decision to reopen schools include the following benefits:

- Allowing students to complete their studies and continue to the next grade or level,
- Essential services, access to nutrition, child welfare, such as preventing violence against children,
- Social and psychological well-being of students and parents/guardians,
- Access to reliable information on how to keep themselves and others safe,
- Reducing the risk of non-return to school, and
- Benefit to society, such as allowing parents to work

The safe school Reopening Guidelines outline a series of protocols to support the school administrators to ensure schools have COVID-19 Safety Measure in place prior to school reopening and measures which need to be reinforced once schools are open.

The Guidelines will ensure the safety of students, staff and families and all schools are expected to follow them.



Iati Bergmans  
**Director General**

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## 1. PRIOR TO SAFE SCHOOL REOPENING

School principals and teachers must ensure that all measures listed below are implemented:

### 1.1 Vaccination

All school personnel including volunteers and students from 18 years old are encouraged to be vaccinated.

All school principals, teachers and ancillary staff are responsible for checking the vaccination cards and documenting proof of vaccination of all school personnel, including volunteers and students from 18+.

### 1.2 Classrooms are ready

- Classrooms are well ventilated.
- Classrooms have staggered entry and exit plans including before and after breaks.
- Classrooms are arranged to enable physical distancing as much as possible (at least 1.5 meters apart).

### 1.3 Ventilation

Ventilation is an important and effective way to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. School principals and teachers must ensure that all classrooms have good ventilation and air flow.

All classroom windows should be open while students are in class to maintain ventilation and good air circulation. Where necessary, install electrical fans in classrooms with large number of students to improve ventilation flow. All fans must blow air in the same direction. Should the number of students exceed the spacing requirements, additional classroom space is to be used to accommodate the students.

## SIGNAGE, CLEANING SUPPLIES AND HAND HYGIENE

### 1.4 Signage

All relevant signage must be in place to clearly mark:

- Entrance and exits
- Pick up and drop off areas
- Walking flows with clear directions
- Distance between students while waiting at the gate, canteen and any other area where students queue or gather. Markings on the ground or wall can be used to demarcate distance (at least 1.5m apart)
- Sick bay – An area prepared in addition to school clinics to accommodate sick students and staff.
- Handwashing points in toilets to encourage users to wash hands after use of facilities

### 1.5 Cleaning Supplies

Classrooms and other common areas must be cleaned regularly to reduce the risk of surface transmission. Before opening, school principals must ensure that cleaning supplies (refer to page

18) are purchased and available. Also ensure the supplies are always available. The following cleaning supplies are recommended:

- Mop buckets (separate buckets for cleaning classroom and toilets)
- Mop heads (separate mop heads for cleaning classroom and toilets)
- Broom
- Disposable cleaning cloths
- Disposable gloves
- Squeeze bottles (to minimize aerosols) for cleaning products
- Disinfectant solution (0.1% sodium hypochlorite or household bleach)

Ensure that all cleaning waste (gloves, cloths, etc.) is disposed of safely.

### **MOH GUIDANCE ON HOW TO PREPARE 0.1% CHLORINE SOLUTION AS PER WHO RECOMMENDATION**

Regular cleaning and disinfecting your school help to prevent the spread of COVID-19 virus and help you to stay healthy. The recommended 3.5 % bleach can be found in shops around the towns however other local or alternative products that meet Ministry of Health (MoH) guidelines can also be used.

### **Should children with underlying health conditions (asthma, diabetes, obesity) return to school?**

Whether a child should go to school depends on their health condition, the current transmission of COVID-19 within their community, and the protective measures the school and community have in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. While current evidence suggests that the risk of severe disease for children is lower overall than for adults, special precautions can be taken to minimize the risk of infection among children, and the benefits of returning to school should also be considered.

Current evidence suggests that people with underlying conditions such as chronic respiratory illness including asthma (moderate-to-severe), obesity, diabetes or cancer, are at higher risk of developing severe disease and death than people without other health conditions. This also appears to be the case for children, but more information is still needed.

# Disinfecting surfaces: guide to preparing chlorine (bleach) solution

**1** Protect yourself by wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

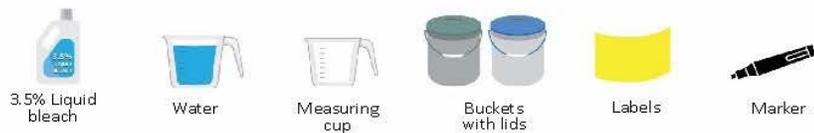
**For hospitals, clinics and health facilities**



**For homes and other public places**



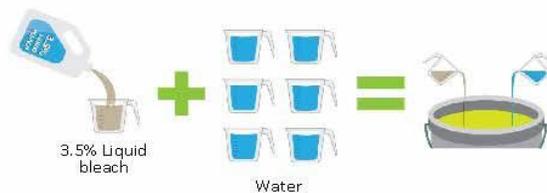
**2** Prepare materials.



**3** Prepare 0.5% chlorine solution.

This strong concentration is used for **disinfecting surfaces contaminated with blood spills/stains and other body fluids.**

Prepare solution in a well-ventilated area.  
Pour 1 part **3.5% liquid bleach** and 6 parts water into a bucket.



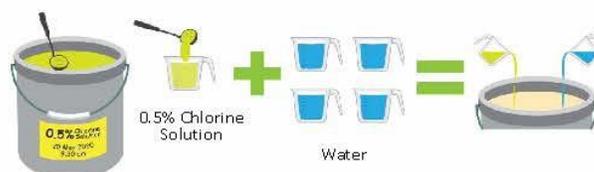
Stir well.  
Label bucket to indicate concentration with the date and time of preparation.



**4** Prepare 0.1% chlorine solution.

This concentration is used for **regular surface disinfection.**

Prepare solution in a well-ventilated area.  
Pour 1 part **0.5% chlorine solution** and 4 parts water into a bucket.



Stir well.  
Label bucket to indicate concentration with the date and time of preparation.



## Reminders



Clean surfaces first with detergent and water before disinfecting with bleach solution.



Apply detergent or disinfectant with a cloth or paper towel. Do not spray directly onto surface.



Prepare bleach solution daily. Discard leftover after 24 hours.



Seal the bucket with a lid when not in use.



Store in shade. Keep out of direct sunlight.



Keep out of children's reach.

## 1.6 Hand Hygiene

Hand hygiene is mandatory and is one of the single most important measure to prevent and minimize the spread of COVID-19. Hand hygiene supplies can be purchased or provided if stock allows. These include:

- Hand washing soap or liquid soap is highly recommended, liquid soap on wall mounted dispensers.
- Approved alcohol-based hand rub (at least 60%) to be used in primary and secondary schools only when handwashing with soap is not available.
- Disposable paper towels (especially in staff toilets).
- Any local or alternative products that meet MoH Guidelines.

**Note:** Hand sanitizers are to be made available at school entry points. School management must ensure that soap and running water or liquid soap is available and accessible for handwashing by staff, students and visitors. Parents and caregivers are also encouraged to provide their children with hand sanitizers to use at school if the school has little to no access to water.



## 1.7 Face Masks

The correct use of face masks is an important measure to prevent the spread of COVID-19 virus via aerosols and person to person transmission. The latest World Health Organization guidelines recommend that:

1. Children aged 12 years and under should not be required to wear masks.
2. For children between six and 11 years of age, a risk-based approach should be applied to the decision to use a mask, considering:
  - a. intensity of transmission in the area where the child is and evidence on the risk of infection and transmission in this age group.
  - b. beliefs, customs and behaviours.
  - c. the child's capacity to comply with the correct use of masks and availability of adult supervision.
  - d. potential impact of mask wearing on learning and development.
  - e. additional considerations such as sport activities or for children with disabilities or underlying diseases.
3. Children and adolescents 12 years or older should wear masks except for schools in Recovery Alert 1.

### EXEMPTION NOTES

For lower levels e.g., Kindergarten and Years 1-3, where compliance can be difficult to manage, it is important to reinforce the following COVID-19 safe measures:

- 1) Telling a teacher when sick or in contact with someone with COVID-19.
- 2) Ventilation of the classroom.
- 3) Hand hygiene and cough protocol.
  - If the risk of transmission is concerning and ventilation and physical distancing of more than 1 meter is not possible, splitting of classes, or staggered classes are recommended.
  - Exceptions can be made for students with disabilities or other reasons where a mask would interfere with the teaching and learning process.
  - Masks are not required during Physical Education classes. However, Physical Education classes must limit the number of students and strictly adhere to COVID-19 safety protocols.
  - Masks can be removed while eating.

Parents and schools must provide masks for their children. School principals and teachers will ensure disposable medical masks are purchased to replace any masks that they may break or become soiled during the day.

### Things to know about Masks

- Correctly fitted masks provide maximum protection from aerosols/very small particles such as viruses.
- Masks need to be the right size to cover the nose, mouth and chin. Loose masks will allow air to move in and out, making the mask less effective. As mask sizes differ, it is recommended that adult size masks are not given to children.
- Masks should be comfortable to wear for an extended period of time as students will be required to wear masks, from the time they leave home for school to when they return home after school (especially if traveling by public transport, on buses, or other carriers).
- Masks worn for longer periods may become humid or moist, particularly in a hot and humid climate. Moisture can lead to skin rashes and can provide an ideal environment for micro-organisms to thrive. Having an extra mask is advisable.
- Masks should be made from appropriate, comfortable fabric such as cotton; the fabric should be tightly woven, and the mask should be comprised of 2-3 layers.
- For students with disabilities such as speech impairments, face shields are recommended instead of masks.
- Reusable masks are encouraged as disposable or single-use masks create pollution.

## MOH Instructions on Wearing a Mask

- Wash hands with water and soap, liquid soap or use hand sanitizer before putting on a mask and after removing it.
- Make sure the mask covers the nose and mouth when worn on the face. If the mask has a small light piece of wire on one part, the side with the wire should be on the nose while the opposite end should be on the chin. Once worn on the face, pinch the wire to ensure it stays above the nose.
- When the mask is removed for eating, it should be stored away from others in a clean place while eating and put on again after eating.
- Cloth masks should be washed daily. Medical masks should be disposed of in a bin after one day's use.

# HOW CHILDREN CAN WEAR FABRIC MASKS

**TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS, REMEMBER TO:**

- Keep at least 1 metre distance from others
- Clean your hands often
- Avoid touching your face and the front of the mask
- Wear the mask with the correct side up and out

**Step 1:** Clean hands before touching the mask

**Step 2:** Inspect the mask for damage or if dirty

**Step 3:** Identify the inside of the mask which will touch the face and the upper part that will cover the nose

**Step 4:** Adjust the mask without leaving gaps on the sides

**Step 5:** Cover mouth, nose and chin

**Step 6:** Avoid touching the front of the mask

**Step 7:** Clean hands before removing the mask

**Step 8:** Remove the mask by the straps

**Step 9:** Store the mask in a clean bag or container

**Step 10:** Clean hands after removing the mask

**Step 11:** Wash the mask at least once a day, preferably with hot water

**Step 12:** Do not share masks with others

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HOW TO PUT ON AND REMOVE

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

### How to perform a particulate respirator seal check



#### Step 1

Perform hand hygiene using soap and water (40-60 seconds) or alcohol based hand rub (20-30 seconds)



#### Step 2

Cup the respirator in your hand with the nose piece at your fingertips allowing the headbands to hang freely below your hand



#### Step 3

Position the respirator under your chin with the nose piece up



#### Step 4

Pull the top strap over your head resting it high at the back of your head.  
Pull the bottom strap over your head and position it around the neck below the ears



#### Step 5

Place fingertips of both hands at the top of the metal nose piece. Mold the nose piece, using the fingers of each hand, to the shape of your nose. Pinching the nose piece using only one hand may result in less effective respirator performance



#### Step 6

Cover the front of the respirator with both hands, being careful not to disturb the position of the respirator

##### Step 6a. Positive seal check

Exhale sharply. A positive pressure inside the respirator = no leakage. If leakage, adjust the position and/or tension straps

##### Step 6b. Negative seal check

- Inhale deeply. If no leakage, negative pressure will make respirator cling to your face
- Leakage will result in loss of negative pressure in the respirator due to air entering through gaps in the seal

## **THERMAL GUNS, SICK BAY, LINEN, AND WASTE MANAGEMENT**

### **1.8 Thermal Guns**

School management can reduce the risk of transmissions of infectious diseases such as COVID-19 by introducing temperature screening using thermal guns prior to the commencement of each school day.

### **1.9 Sick Bay**

School Management should identify a well-ventilated room or space that can be used as a Sick Bay for the school that is located closest to the school entry/exit. The Sick Bay is for students who feel unwell during school hours or exhibit any signs and symptoms of COVID-19. It is to be used as an isolation point before parents/ guardians or medical personnel can pick up the child.

The schools will contact doctors or nurses from the nearest clinic or hospital to determine the next steps in terms of case management. A symptomatic student or staff member will be either transported to the nearest medical facility or picked up by the medical team depending on the severity of symptoms.

The Sick Bay should be equipped with a bed, bed linens, and blankets as well as basic first aid items such as a thermometer, bowl, bucket, and surgical gloves and other essentials. Arrange the space so that temperatures can be taken upon one's arrival to the Sick Bay. Nurses can also be attached to schools in addition to School Nurses, to tend to students and staff in the sick bay and alternatively schools can be assigned to nearby clinics.

All schools should have basic Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to be used when caring for a symptomatic student (may ask MOH for help with PPE). This includes gowns, surgical masks, gloves and face shields. When caring for the student, physical distancing may not be possible at all times and thus the correct use of PPE is an important protective barrier.

### **1.10 Linen**

Soiled and used linen must be soaked in hot water for 1 hour then washed with soap or liquid detergent and water and sun dried.

### **1.11 Waste Management**

- Proper disposal of PPE and medical waste in a pedal/rubbish bin.
- Bins for soiled waste should be labelled as “yellow bins for soiled waste” regardless of the colour of the bin, to ensure that protocols for safe disposal of waste are followed.
- Appropriate management and final disposal of soiled waste should be discussed with the Provincial Health Team/Local Health Taskforce with guidance from the Ministry of Health – Incident management Team for COVID-19.

## SCHOOL CANTEEN OPERATORS

### 1.12 School Canteen Operators

In schools where a canteen is the primary source of student sustenance, all efforts should be made to reopen the canteen safely when students return to school. School canteen operators must consider the following:

- Implement contactless ordering system to avoid gathering at the school canteen. Canteen operators to liaise with teachers to take lunch orders from students and teachers prior to the start of the school day in order to pre-pack and label food for pick-up or dispatch during lunch breaks to avoid unnecessary gathering at the school canteen.
- Operating times may need to be adjusted to account for staggered lunch or recess breaks, as well as staggered school start and finish times.
- School canteen operators are encouraged to be fully vaccinated. They must observe physical distancing, wear masks correctly except for schools in Recover Alert Level 1, and use appropriate PPE when preparing and serving food.
- Provision of handwashing needs to be adequate and functional at the preparation area in the canteen which would allow for handwashing with soap or liquid soap and safe running water is mandatory before and after handling food.
- Crowd control.
- Disinfection of the counter and other areas of contact.
- School Canteens must be discouraged from selling unhealthy food.

### 1.13 Other Service Providers

Training sessions are conducted for all service providers for schools before reopening. Training topics include:

- Temperature taking – reinforcing the importance of using the forehead to take temperature readings rather than the hand or other area.
- Hand hygiene – transport operators (bus drivers, rural service licensed (RSL) and boats) must:
  - Comply with hand hygiene protocols and enforce the practice with students.
  - Disinfection of vehicles and boats regularly.
- All service providers over the age of 18 are encouraged to be fully vaccinated.

## 2. WHEN SCHOOLS REOPEN

The Protocol and Guidelines outlined in this Section apply both to the initial reopening of schools and to ongoing school operations and form the basis for ensuring that schools can safely continue to remain open.

### 2.1 When Children Arrive at School

School Principals must ensure that:

- Standard Operation Procedures (SOP) are in place and communicated to all. Teachers and Staff to adhere to COVID-19 protocols (correct mask use, hand hygiene, physical distance) and are reminded to monitor observance of COVID-19 safety measures in their classrooms.
- Teachers and staff are tested for COVID-19 and cleared before the school is to reopen. Any teacher or staff with symptoms of COVID-19 should be tested prior to restarting work.
- There is a teacher or staff at the school entrance to guide parents, guardians and students to always remind and reinforce COVID-19 safety protocols including physical distancing, correct mask use and hand hygiene to all students and parents. A log book is also placed at the school entrance to log any visitors to the school. This can also be used for contact tracing should the need arise.
- There is a teacher assigned to welcome students and parents, answer questions, and reassure parents. Some parents/guardians and students may have more questions or require additional reassurance. In these instances, teachers must exhibit patience and understanding.

### 2.2 Temperature Checks

School principals are advised to coordinate regularly with their respective education offices in the province to determine whether the local situation warrants temperature checks for anyone entering the premises. If necessary, the following guidelines should be adhered to:

- Temperature screening is conducted using a handheld, medically approved temperature monitoring device (thermal gun) to accurately measure the presence of fever.
- Anyone with high temperature is to be refused entry.
- A designated staff member remains at the school entrance to carry out temperature checks of anyone entering the school premises (teachers and other staff, students, parents and visitors).
- If temperature is less than 37.5°C, the person can proceed to enter the school or commence duty.
- If temperature is 37.5°C or higher, the person should be denied entry into the school compound (refer to 2.6).
- Thermal guns should be disinfected following each screening session.

## 2.3 During School Hours

### School Principals are to ensure that:

- **Masks** are worn correctly by all staff and students over 12 years old at all times except during physical education, when eating and for schools in Recovery Alert Level 1.
- Any **gatherings** at school meet the current MOH COVID-19 requirements for number of attendees/capacity limits.
- **Physical distancing** is maintained as much as possible in class seating arrangements.
- Classrooms have good **ventilation** and air flows in one direction. If fans are used, they must blow in one direction to remove air from the classroom and allow fresh air to enter the classroom.
- If **community transmission rates** increase, MOET may provide further targeted action for schools in that area.
- The number of parents/guardians entering the school premises is minimized and all visitors adhere to COVID-19 safety protocols. Parents should make prior arrangements for visits.
- **Students who are unwell should remain at home**, supported by a medical note with specific dates of absence from a Registered Medical practitioner. If the child has COVID-19 symptoms, this will not be required immediately. Plans should be in place to provide students with work they can complete at home for the duration of their absence (if they are well enough to do so).
- Updated medical treatment authorizations are obtained from parents/guardians.
- The following **posters** should be displayed in strategic locations:
  - Handwashing with soap or liquid soap at key times – eating areas, ablution blocks (toilets), school entrance.
  - Handwashing steps – above or near handwashing facilities.
  - Signs and symptoms – in classrooms and common areas.
- Children are engaged in **COVID-19 awareness** activities. Liaise with the MOH staff for relevant materials and updates.
- Students and teachers **refrain from sharing food**, utensils, drinking bottles, and cups, they should bring their own.
- **Cleaning and disinfection** procedures are routinely followed and supervised.
- **Stigma and discrimination** against students or families that have COVID-19 or have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 is not tolerated.
- Psychosocial support for students, staff and parents/guardians through counselling or faith-based support should be considered and if available, this information is communicated. Staff may be trained and assigned counselling duties

## 2.4 Visitors

- Unauthorized visitors should not enter the school premises until further notice.
- Parents/guardians and personnel for repairs and deliveries are permitted to enter.
- All visitors and volunteers entering school premises are encouraged to be fully vaccinated and show proof of vaccination, have their temperature checked. For parents that would like to inspect the school to determine whether or not to send their children back to school, it is recommended that they do this outside of school hours. Schools may determine additional protocols for visitors during school hours. All other visitor protocols outlined above should be followed.

## 2.5 Excursions and Overseas Visitors, and Tourists Travel



All excursions are closed until further notice. Exceptions require authorization from the provincial education office or from principals of formal and non-formal tertiary institutions. Excursion outside of the school or the tertiary institution premises are to observe public covid-19 protocols.

## 2.6 Detection of a COVID-19 case

Any cases of COVID-19 in a school should be managed with utmost sensitivity and the information must be shared and kept **confidential**. The name of the individual should not be released to anyone except to MOH and nearest hospital or clinic and the community health task force. The school must be ultimately informed, and all COVID-19 measures are to be enforced. Stigma surrounding the case is to be discouraged.

### Please note the following:

Any student appearing symptomatic must be immediately referred to health authorities.

- A **Support Group** comprised of designated staff members is established and trained to carry out actions regarding symptomatic children, follow up and monitoring.
- The **Support Group** should work in close contact with teachers assisting in community engagement for COVID-19 operations.
- For any positive cases through routine surveillance, affected individuals would be asked to isolate deemed necessary.
- Record every case of absenteeism, especially when sick, as part of the surveillance Programme.

## 2.7 Contact Tracing

If there is a positive case(s) detected at the School, the Surveillance Unit from the Ministry of Health may be in contact with the School Support group to undertake contact tracing of the affected classes. Further guidance will be provided by the Ministry of Health at the relevant time.

### 3. MANAGING STAFF AND STUDENTS WITH COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

#### 3.1 Managing Staff or Students with COVID-19 Symptoms in Schools

1. All staff and students living outside of the school campus with COVID-19 symptoms **should stay home** and inform the school principal and teachers that they will not report to school. They should proceed to testing at a health facility and inform the school if the test is positive.
2. If a staff member or student has COVID-19 symptoms while at school, they will be directed to the Sick Bay to self-isolate. They should obtain a COVID-19 test or visit the nearest health centre. The school management will contact the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) or the Local Health Taskforce to inform them of the suspected case before arrival to the facility and to determine next steps.

#### 3.2 COVID-19 symptoms

**Includes:**

- Fever
- Chills and Sweats
- Cough
- Sore Throat
- Shortness of breath
- Running nose
- Loss or change in sense of taste or smell
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Staff or students with any symptoms should be recommended for a COVID-19 test.

#### 3.3 Isolation and Supervision

School staff and students showing symptoms of COVID-19 will be isolated in the **identified Sick Bay** with a designated focal point until they are retrieved by a parent/guardian or medical team. For Day students, they can remain in the sick bay until they are picked up by their parents or guardians.

#### 3.4 Staff Protection and Hygiene

While the student or staff member is in isolation, the designated focal point that is supervising them will need to wear the required **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** including gloves, gowns, face shields and masks and carry out frequent **hand hygiene** practices to protect themselves.

If the child or staff member tests positive, the Sick Bay focal point will be required to go through the **Infection Prevention Control (IPC) compliance assessment tool** to ascertain whether the staff should isolate.

### 3.5 School Actions/Next Steps

If your school is directly impacted by a confirmed case of COVID-19, work in collaboration with the Minimum Health Management Standards from MoH to confirm what the school needs to do. This may include the following:

- School closure for a short period of time for contact tracing and testing.
- Decontamination of areas of exposure if required by the MOH Infection Prevention and Control guidelines. This will include disinfection of classrooms, student desks, tables and school equipment.
- The schools will be made operational once the MOH provides clearance for reopening.
- The teachers and staff take responsibility to ensure routine cleaning and sanitation of learning spaces.

### 3.6 Common Terms Associated with COVID-19 Contacts

1. **Primary Close Contact:** Someone who has had face-to-face contact of any duration or shared an enclosed space with a confirmed case during their infectious period (from 48 hours before onset of symptoms until the case is no longer infectious).
2. **Casual Contact:** Someone who has been in the same setting with a confirmed case during their infectious period but does not meet the definition of a primary close contact.

## 4. SCHOOL REOPENING CHECKLIST

This checklist was developed to ensure schools have COVID-19 safety measures in place prior to reopening but it can also be used as a monitoring tool to ensure measures continue to be adhered to over time.

### 4.1 School Support Team (SST)



- SST established and trained
- SST and school principals and teachers have Safe School Reopening Guideline or Plan

### 4.2 Entry into School

SST to develop Document (SOP) depicting flow of entry into school which outlines:



- Flow of incoming and outgoing students clearly marked
- Markings to demarcate 1.5m distance
- Temperature checks – normal, abnormal and action to follow
- Vaccination verification for staff, parents and visitors.
- Visitors and parents must show proof of vaccination to enter premises
- Hand Sanitizer or soap and water at entrance for hand hygiene.

### 4.3 Thermal Guns to Check Temperatures



- Thermal gun is available and functional.
- Staff/teachers able to demonstrate correct usage.

#### **Designated staff member in place to carry out temperature checks:**

- Normal -  $<37.5^{\circ}\text{C}$  - student, staff, visitor permitted to enter
- High -  $\geq 37.5^{\circ}\text{C}$  - student, staff, visitor not permitted to enter
- Register to record temperatures in place and dated daily.

### 4.4 Face Masks



- Supply of disposable and reusable face masks available for replacement purposes.

## 4.5 Hand Hygiene



- Are posters on handwashing steps visible in handwashing area?
- Are posters on handwashing key times visible at entrance, toilets and eating areas?
- Are there adequate handwashing facilities in place and are they functional?

### Locations?

- Toilet area
- Entrance of school
- Canteen/eating area

### Questions to always ask prior to hand hygiene

- Are there soap bars or liquid soap available?
- Is there sufficient clean water supply available?
- If handwashing facility not present, is alcohol-based hand rub (at least 60%) available?

## 4.6 Preparation of Classrooms

- Is there adequate ventilation inside the classroom (windows/ doors open)?
- Is there adequate circulation (windows, electric fans, air conditioning)?
- Do closed rooms - computer labs, staff room - have functioning air conditioning system or good air circulation system?
- Are the desks arranged to ensure safe physical distancing as much as possible (both sides, back and front)?

## 4.7 Cleaning Supplies



- Mop buckets (separate buckets for toilet and classroom).
- Mop heads (separate for toilet and classroom).
- Brooms.
- Disposable cleaning cloths.
- Disposable gloves, or rubber household gloves.
- Spray bottles for disinfectants.
- Disinfectant solution (sodium hypochlorite or household bleach).

## 4.8 Cleaning Instructions



School has a safe hygiene protocol which includes:

- Disinfection guidelines
- List of high contact surfaces
- Cleaning frequency

#### 4.9 Toilet Facility



- Adequate and functional toilet facilities (includes flush and/or water seal toilets) are available and accessible
- Rubbish bins for waste disposal.
- Menstrual hygiene management disposal bins in girl's bathroom and female staff toilet is available
- Handwashing sinks with functional tap.
- Bar soap or liquid soap available
- Disinfection plan (roster for cleaning) and is supervised.

#### 4.10 Protocol on Managing a suspected COVID-19 case in place – Sick Bay

Separate room or space with good ventilation identified and allocated as the school sick bay.

**Sick Bay is equipped with basic first aid items:**



- Thermal gun
- Water jug
- Disposable cups
- Bandages
- Bed/mattress, pillow, linens, blankets

**PPE available:**



- Surgical or N95 mask
- Gown
- Face shield
- Gloves
- Emergency contact list and contact person of the nearest Health facility (to report symptomatic individuals or positive case during school hours).
- Record students/staff admitted to sick bay
- Handwashing facility with soap and safe water or alcohol-based hand rub.
- Disposal pedal bins for infectious waste labelled “yellow bins for soiled waste”.

#### 4.11 Signage or Markings



- Demarcation of entrances and exits.
- Clear direction of walking flow.
- Distancing of 1.5m at school entry when waiting in que to be screened, and other areas where crowd control may be difficult.
- Clear directions to Sick Bay, toilet, canteen, handwashing facility.
- Student pick up and drop off area for parents, guardians or school bus.

#### 4.12 Service Providers



- Safe COVID-19 measures awareness session provided to ALL service providers before school reopening covering the following topics:
  - Temperature taking (forehead rather than back of hand) before boarding bus, boat, or RSL vehicles.
  - Hand hygiene (provision of hand sanitizer in school buses, RSL vehicles and boats).
  - Disinfection of vehicles and boats.
- Periodic monitoring to ensure procedures are adhered to over time.

#### 4.13 School Canteen Operators



- Ensure canteen operators have a visible SOP.
- Contactless ordering system is in place.
- Signage for 1.5m physical distancing in canteen area.
- Handwashing facility with soap, water and paper towels must be available and functional.
- Alcohol based hand rub (at least 60%) available at counter.
- Rubbish bins for food rubbish.
- Crowd control measures in place and adhered to.

#### 4.14 Managing Staff or Student with COVID-19 symptoms

SOP in place for management of suspected cases which includes:

- Pathway of management of suspected case.
- Emergency contact list and contact person for Provincial EOC or local health taskforce or nearest health centre for referral purposes.
- Roster for staff/teacher assigned to manage the Sick Bay.
- Staff/teacher protection and hygiene.
- Disinfection/decontamination of areas of exposure in the school (Classroom, furniture and contact surfaces, linens etc...).

#### 4.15 List of supplies for School Reopening

Item	Reference
<b>Mop buckets (Separated for classroom and toilet use)</b>	<b>1.4 Cleaning Supplies</b>
<b>Mop heads (Separated for classroom and toilet use)</b>	
<b>Broom</b>	
<b>Cleaning Cloth (Disposal Cloth is recommended)</b>	
<b>Disposal gloves</b>	
<b>Spray bottles (Containers that dispense liquid such as “squeeze bottles” can be used to apply detergent/disinfectants directly to surfaces or to cleaning cloths with minimal aerosol generation)</b>	
<b>Disinfectant solution (e.g., Sodium Hypochlorite or household bleach such as Janola – refer to section 1.4 for mixture)</b>	
<b>Bar soap or liquid soap on wall mounted dispensers:</b>	<b>1.5 Hand Hygiene</b>
<b>Approved alcohol-based (at least 60%) hand sanitizer (to be used only when hand washing with soap is not an option)</b>	
<b>Paper towels (especially in staff toilets)</b>	
<b>Thermal guns for checking temperature</b>	<b>1.7 Thermal guns</b>
<b>Basic first aid items for Sick Bay (bed, bed linens, blanket, thermometer, bowl or bucket etc....)</b>	<b>1.9 Sick Bay</b>
<b>Basic PPE (gowns, masks, gloves and face shields)</b>	

## 5. STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR SCHOOL REOPENING

The Ministry of Education & Training (MoET) is requesting for all Principals and Heads of Institutions to complete the following tables, with guidance from the “Safe Schools Reopening Guidelines, and submit to your respective Provincial Education Office.

<b>SCHOOL PROFILE</b>	
Name of School:	
Level of Education (ECCE, Primary, Secondary, PSET):	
Zone:	
Island:	
Province:	
Is school a day school or boarding school?	
Name of Principal:	
Telephone Number:	
Official Email Address:	
Name of Chairperson of School Council:	
Telephone Number:	
Chairperson's Email Address:	
Name of Chairperson of School Health Committee:	
Telephone Number:	
Chairperson's Email Address:	
Number of Female Students:	
Number of Male Students:	
Number of Female Teachers:	
Number of Male Teachers:	
Number of Ancillary/Administration Staff:	
How many staff houses are inside the school premises and are occupied?	

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How many students have any health conditions, like asthma, heart conditions or any other underlying health conditions?	
How many students have disability conditions?	
How many teachers have any health conditions, like asthma, heart conditions, high blood pressure or any other underlying health conditions?	
How many ancillary or administration staff have any health conditions, like asthma, heart conditions, high blood pressure, or any other underlying health conditions?	
How many women living in the school premises are pregnant?	
How many men, women, children or family members are living with staff in the school premises?	
Does the school have a nurse or a health teacher?	
Does the school have a clinic, dispensary or any other health facility close to the school?	
If yes, then how far are they from the school (in kilometres)?	

## Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Schools

What is a Standard Operation Procedure (SOP)?

A SOP is a plan which outlines the steps which a school must carry out before it can reopen again. Thus, it is important to complete the following table as it will allow the Ministry of Education & Training (MoET) and the Ministry of Health (MoH) to assess your school, and verify whether the school should open again.

SOP	Schools must have the following standard operating procedures in place	Yes	No	If "No", provide reason why there is no procedures in place, and when the school will get this done.
1	A WASH or School Health Committee that is trained in basic COVID 19 protocols, counselling in COVID 19 situation and WASH practices.			
2	Put up signs around the school to inform the public that they must not enter the school premises.			
3	All students, staff and visitors must have a clean mask to wear inside the school or outside the school premises.			
4	A staff must be stationed at the main entrance to be able to check temperature for students, staff and visitors that enter the school premises.			
5	Must have thermal guns to read temperature for students, staff and visitors that enter the school premises.			
6	Must have a log book to record details of any person entering the school premises. The details will include where they live, and where he/she has come from, and their phone contact.			
7	Must have approval from your respective Provincial PEO for any visitors or persons that would like to visit the school.			
8	Awareness program with parents takes place on school reopening.			
9	Must have accurate personal details of all parents or guardians of each			

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	student, and information on where they live.			
10	COVID 19 and WASH posters must be placed in every classroom, hand washing points, outside the main hall and at all school entrances.			
11	All important areas of school must have water and soap to wash hands (e.g. school entrances, in front of classroom, in front of toilets, at the playground, and places where students eat).			
12	Must have a sick bay or a room where a student can be isolated to, while waiting for referral to either go back home or to an isolation centre, if a student or staff is sick.			
13	Teacher or students that has flu like symptoms must go to the clinic to get a sick leave, to verify his/her absence from school.			
14	Must have signs showing distances between students and staff to allow for social distancing.			
15	Tables in the classroom must be, at least, 1.5 meters apart.			
16	Staff must sanitize tables and areas that student and staff use a lot each day.			
17	Must have a timetable for alternative teaching arrangement if the student number in a class is big.			
18	School must have in place a plan to allow teachers to monitor and provide learning to those students who are not comfortable to return to school yet,			
19	Must have Home School Packages (HSP) prepared, in the event that there is a second wave of community outbreak, and there is a lockdown.			

Name of Principal: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Chairperson School Council: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/20\_\_

## 6. APPROVAL PROCESS OF STANDARDS OPERATING PROCEDURES

### Background

This note is developed to guide the approval process and criteria of SOPs by provinces, including the verification by the MoET as per the press release by the MoET on the reopening of schools across the 6 provinces.

### Scope

This note covers the 4 key areas:

1. Communication to schools on guidelines and SOPs
2. Submission and approval process of SOPs
3. Monitoring and verification visits
4. Roles and responsibilities between Schools, Provincial Education Offices and MoET

### 6.1 Communication to schools on Guideline and SOPs

The Safe School Reopening Guideline and SOP template are available on the MoET website. All schools are encouraged to read through the guideline to assist them in developing their SOPs as required by the Ministry of Health. A school will only re-open once the Provincial Health Promoting School Committee (PHPSC) have determined the school has achieved the minimum scores required in the SOP for reopening.

The Provincial Education Offices will organize short consultations with all schools in their respective provinces to provide further guidance on the use of this guide and SOPs. A variety of approaches will be used such as; in-person visits, conference or individual phone calls, email where possible and other relevant means. During the consultations, the content of the guideline will be discussed as well as the how schools are to use the SOP template to develop their respective SOPs. The provincial PEOs communicate the deadlines for SOP submissions upon direction from MoET. In the case that schools cannot be contacted or have communication issues, a support visit must be conducted by the province. Should schools encounter issues with developing their SOPs, this must be documented and addressed to prevent delay of schools reopening.

The Provincial Education Office is to document:

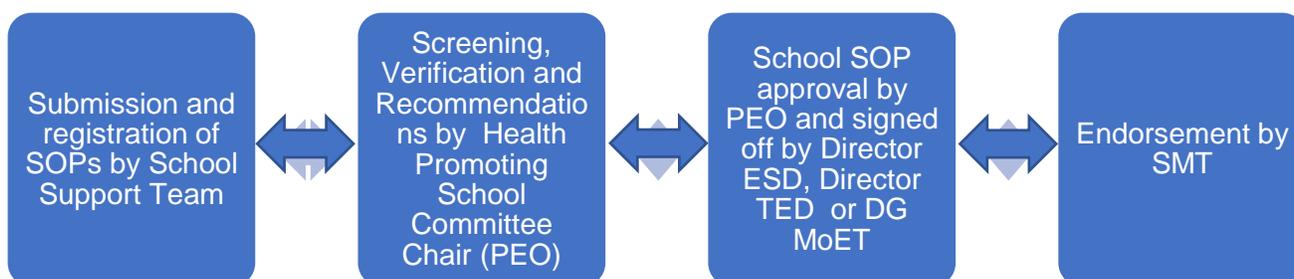
- All SOP submissions
- All schools that encounter issues with developing their SOPs
- SOPs that do not use the standard SOP template by MoET

All Schools are to refer to the guidelines to develop their SOPs with the relevant management committee, which will be the school health committee or any other active committee nominated or appointed by the school council or administration.

The SOP's checklist can also be accessed [online](#) via google forms. All entries received will be forwarded to each respective provincial education office for record and submission to the Provincial HPSC.

## 6.2 Submission and approval process of SOPs

This section describes the entire process from submission to approval including communication in four steps.



### 6.2.1 Submission and registration of SOPs

The Provincial appointed Support Team documents and crosscheck all SOP submissions against the SOP checklist before forwarding them to the PHPSC. Hard copy of SOPs can be submitted to the Provincial Education Offices. All submissions can be using Open-VEMIS email, messenger, Facebook, WhatsApp, IMO, submitted or even via the Google Survey link sent by the MoET. A table is to be maintained of which schools have submitted the SOP.

### 6.2.2 Scoring of SOPs

Provincial Health Promoting School Committee members are responsible to review the SOPs using a scoring sheet.

There are 19 items in the SOP checklist, each worth 1 point. Items 1 – 15 are rated High Priority, and items 16 – 19 are rated Medium Priority. For the school to be granted immediate reopening approval, it has to score 8/15 High Priority items. These scores should be recorded in an overall scoring sheet, see sample in annex I. The review should also include the text provided. In case the text is not aligned to “tick” made, the reviewer might decide to change a yes into no or vice versa.

### 6.2.3 Verification of scores and recommendations by committee

As per the 4 steps diagram process outlined above, the Provincial Health Promoting Schools Committee is also responsible for the review of SOP's scores.

Verification will be conducted in all schools that have submitted their SOPs. The score obtained and approved will guide the recommendations to be made by the Provincial HPSC to either the Director Education Services or Director Tertiary Education, and in their absence, to the Director General of the MoET. The scoring will be made available upon request.

### Scoring criteria

Points	Status	Recommendation
18	Meeting all requirements	<b>Immediate reopen</b> - schools could be used as an example to other schools
15 (of the first High Priority items)	Meeting most of the requirements	<b>Immediate reopen</b> , but recommendations to be shared with the schools on improvement areas
8 (out of the first High Priority items)	Meeting key criteria	Reopening approved with strong recommendation for improvement of key areas.
<8 or no SOP	Not meeting most / any criteria	Not reopen: Engage with schools through phone contacts or support visits to prioritize actions to improve all required areas

Based on these criteria, the list of schools that are recommended for immediate reopening should be forwarded by the PEO, as Chairman of the PHPSC, and approved by the Director Education Services, Director Tertiary Education, and in their absence, the Director General of the Ministry of Education and Training for endorsement.

#### 6.2.4 School reopening approval by Director Education Services Directorate (ESD), Director Tertiary Education Directorate (TED) and Director General (DG) MoET

The provincial PEO submits the list of schools recommended for opening by the provincial HPSC, to the Director ESD, Director TED, and in their absence, to the DG of MoET.

The provincial education office will formally notify the schools of their approval for reopening no more later than 24 hours after receiving approval by the PHPSC. The PEO with the support of the Provincial HPSC may issue a press release, if need be.

The provincial education office will continue to liaise with the underscored schools and provide support.

The process followed, scores, and decision is to be communicated by the province to the MoET for validation purposes. The MoET school reopening task force is to review the process followed and ensure that this was done in a correct manner. The MoET will not intervene in the decisions made concerning individual schools reopening by the provinces, but will ensure quality assurance support that correct process and criteria were followed. MoET is mandated to provide support to the provinces to ensure that all schools meet minimum reopening standards as per the guideline. This could be done by offering trainings, procurement of supplies or hardware investment.

### 6.3 Monitoring and verification visits

The province will conduct regular monitoring and verification visits throughout the process, with a focus on supporting schools in remote areas or schools that do not meet the minimum reopening scores.

Once several SOPs have been approved and schools have been reopened, a sample of schools should be audited on a regular basis to verify that schools are complying with their SOPs. These audits will use the same checklist as the SOP.

Findings from these visits will be documented, communicated and discussed with PHPSC. These will also be used as lessons learned to enable improvements to future support to schools.

### 6.4 Roles and responsibilities between schools, province and MoET

Stakeholder	Roles
<b>Schools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and submit SOPs.</li> <li>Ensure compliance and implementation of SOP as per the guideline.</li> </ul>
<b>Provincial Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inform schools on guidelines and SOP.</li> <li>check the school SOPs.</li> <li>Support schools that do not meet the minimum SOP requirements.</li> <li>Submit SOPs to Provincial HPS.</li> </ul>
<b>Province Health Promoting Schools Committees</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review membership of committee (school health promotion) as per policy.</li> <li>Review scores of schools.</li> <li>Recommendations for school reopening.</li> <li>Review scores.</li> <li>Endorse recommendations.</li> </ul>
<b>MoET</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approval of reopening of schools.</li> <li>Avail guidelines and SOP template.</li> <li>Provide technical assistance to provinces.</li> <li>Provide quality assurance on the process followed.</li> <li>Support provinces in assistance to schools.</li> <li>Receiving the Google Survey and forwarding to the Provincial Education Offices.</li> </ul>
<b>MoH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult with MoET on overall pandemic situation in Vanuatu and implications on schools.</li> <li>Offer technical support on request of MoET.</li> </ul>