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சுகாதார அமைச்சு
Ministry of Health

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திகதி) 2020.12. 21
Date)

All Provincial Directors of Health Services,
All Regional Directors of Health Services,
Director NIHS,
Chief Medical Officer of Health- CMC,
All Medical Officers of Health,
All School Medical Officers,

Management following detection of a suspected / confirmed case of COVID-19 in the school setting

This is further to the guidelines issued on preparedness and response for COVID-19 outbreak in the school setting on 29th April 2020 and guidelines for re-opening of schools dated 20.11.2020 by Director General of Health Services.

1. General guidance

Ensure that the school authorities are adhering to the instructions given by the circular no ED/01/21/07/03-2020 dated 2020-05-11 by Ministry of Education.

All schools should make arrangements to screen and identify children / staff members / other visitors for features suggestive of COVID-19 (cough, fever, sore throat, anosmia, difficulty in breathing, diarrhoea) at entry point to school or within the premises. All schools should have a sick room/isolation room to keep identified children / staff members away from the rest of the school.

2. Encounter of a student / staff member with symptoms suspicious of COVID-19 at school setting

2.1 Isolate student/staff member in sick room / isolation room in the school.

The place has to be safe and well ventilated. The child / staff member should wear a face mask. Show empathy and kind approach towards the child / staff member and avoid creating stigma.

2.2 Inform parent / guardian if it is a child and get them to the school if possible.

2.3 The education sector has been informed to communicate with the relevant Medical Officer of Health (MOH)/ PHI on the symptomatic child / staff member.

2.4 If the student/staff member needs PCR testing for COVID-19, the area MOH should coordinate and arrange for PCR testing.

2.5 If the student needs hospitalization, always accompany with a parent / guardian / teacher.

3. If one or more children / staff members become first contacts of a COVID-19 positive patient (eg: Family member)

3.1 Children or the staff member has to be quarantined for a minimum of 14 days. They should not be getting down to school during the quarantine period.

3.2 At the end of quarantine, according to present recommendation exit PCR should be arranged (which will be arranged at the resident MOH area)

- 3.3 If a quarantined child is required to sit for an essential exam, alternate arrangement should be made to get the participation of the child
- 3.4 Maintain a register for quarantined children / staff members at the school
- 3.5 Avoid stigma and discrimination for quarantined children when they return to school.

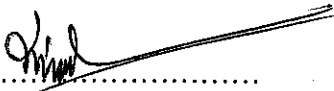
4. Encounter of a student / staff member confirmed with COVID-19

- 4.1 The situation should be handled by the area (of the school) Medical Officer of Health and SPHI/PHI.
- 4.2 MOH should take a detailed contact history of the child – from a parent / guardian and class teachers and from the child if possible.
- 4.3 Exposure period and the definition of a close contact should be taken, as if for any other COVID-19 confirmed patient.
- 4.4 Close contacts need to be home quarantined for 14 days after risk assessment by the MOH/SPHI/PHI of the area. The decision should be informed to parents / guardians by the school/health authorities.
- 4.5 MOH/PHI should share the contact list with relevant MOH of the area of the child's residence, if there are children resides in an outside area.
- 4.6 The immediate environment of the index patient (furniture, toilets, other equipment, floor, staircase railings, etc.) should be cleaned appropriately to prevent infection transmission.
- 4.7 Strengthen the school preparedness and infection prevention and control measures in the school.
- 4.8 If the school has a satisfactory plan to respond and detect any emergency situation early and children and staff are not close contacts of the index patient, regular functions of the school can be resumed.

5. Decision for closure of a school due to a COVID-19 related issue

Decision on closure of a school should be taken only after proper risk assessment by local health (MOH/RE/CCP/RDHS) and education teams after consultation with relevant National level health authorities (Epidemiology Unit – 0112695112 / 0112681548 / School Health Unit – FHB - 0112692746). Concurrence should be obtained from the Director General of Health Services for the final decision.

You are requested to immediately communicate the content of this guideline to all relevant authorities.


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Dr. Asela Gunawardena
Director General of Health Services

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