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Guidelines

Health Guidelines for Education Institutions Reopening During COVID 19 Pandemic

Contents

Summary

Summary

Health Guidelines for Education Institutions Reopening During COVID 19 Pandemic covers essential aspects for safe re-opening of all educational institutions in Pakistan. These guidelines aim to mitigate risk while providing the opportunity to resume educational activity for children, adolescents and young adults.

Three key mitigation strategies need to form the basis of implementing the required SOPs:

1. *Staged/phased re-opening of educational institutes, staggering, cohorting of students in same groups and Standard Infrastructure Guidance, especially WASH and ventilation facilities.*

2. *Ensuring the SOPs of Social distancing, handwashing and face coverings*

3. *Implementation of health screening, COVID19 surveillance sentinel testings and continuous monitoring in educational institutes.*

All educational institutes, including Madarris and kindergartens should create comprehensive contingency plans covering a comprehensive list of eventualities based on the health guidelines. Periodic review of the implementation of the health SOPs should be carried out by local authorities and school administration

Objective

To provide health guidelines for the administrators, principals and managers of public and private educational institutions, schools and madrassahs for re-opening in the context of ongoing COVID19 Pandemic while ensuring all possible precautions to minimize the risk of spread of infection.

Rationale

School closure disrupts the delivery of in-person instruction which has negative ramifications at the individual and societal levels and carries an immense potential to increase the existing disparities between different socio-economic strata of the society with far-reaching consequences.
The in-person school environment is important because it:
- provides educational instruction;
- supports the development of social and emotional skills;
- creates a safe environment for learning;
- facilitates physical activity.

Information about COVID-19 in children is still somewhat limited, but the information that is available suggests that children with confirmed COVID-19 generally have mild symptoms. However, a small percentage of children have been reported to have more severe illness. Children with COVID-19 can spread infection to others and should avoid contact with the elderly and people of any age who may be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

The best available evidence from countries that have opened schools indicate that COVID-19 poses low risks to school-aged children, at least in areas with low community transmission, and suggests that children are unlikely to be the major drivers for the spread of COVID-19. Strategies which have been adopted by different countries to minimize risk of exposure and transmission in educational institutions include:

1. *Staged/Phased approach, i.e. gradually opening classes for different age groups*
2. *Staggering: different school arrival and break times, breaking large classes into smaller groups*
3. *Distancing: 6 feet between desks/seating and open-air classes where feasible and if weather allows (mosquito bites and risk of dengue and malaria needs to be considered)*
4. *Use of face mask and stringent hand hygiene practices*
5. *Appropriate screening protocols*

In future educational institutions can play an important role in slowing the spread of diseases, protecting vulnerable students/staff and to ensure a safe and healthy learning environment. All decisions about implementing school-based strategies (e.g., dismissals, event cancellations, other social distancing measures) should be made in collaboration with local health officials who can help determine the level of transmission in the community and to determine which set of mitigation strategies may be most appropriate for their current situation. While framing these guidelines we are cognizant of the fact, that teachers/administrators of institutions with younger children will find it very challenging to implement some of the behavior related SOPs, hence local solutions and innovative methodologies may have to be adopted after understanding the spirit of the guiding principles. This would also require specific training of academic and administrative staff.

These guidelines are divided into 3 segments
1. Mitigation strategies for the Preparation for a Safe Return to School
   - Key Consideration for the school reopening.
   - Epidemiological criteria
2. SOPs and guidance for the education institutes after reopening
3. Guidance for maintaining a safe environment for operations

Mitigation strategies for the Preparation for a Safe Return to Schools

Key Consideration for the school reopening

Phasing/Staging
In order to mitigate the risk of exposure while re opening the institutions it is wiser to phase the school openings according to age groups. Phasing can be done in multiple ways and should be decided in consultation with relevant federal and provincial authorities, keeping in mind a wide range of factors, including health outcome, learning outcome and compliance.

Staggering
To minimize interaction between different age groups one of the following may be used as per local preference:
- The classes can be divided in to 4-hour shift of students twice a day
- Alternative days attendance
- Utilizing weekends for some of the shifts

Cohorting the students
The same teacher can be assigned to a fixed cohort of students, where possible, to minimize the exposure of different groups to each other.

WASH
The WASH rapid assessment list is proposed to be checked before the opening of the schools by relevant authorities and to be maintained on monthly basis (RA checklist Annex-1)

De-Densification
To plan for reopening the schools, every institution should consider another important strategy i.e. to "de-densify." The density of a building is defined as a fraction by calculating the number of total persons inside (the numerator) divided by the walkable floor area (the denominator). There are two ways to make a building less crowded, by either decreasing the numerator by reducing the number of persons inside the space or increase the denominator by expanding the physical space available. Every student should remain six feet apart, and it is suggested for institutions to aim for a density of one student per 113 square feet space availability. Evidence suggests classroom density was around one student per 20-30 square feet before the pandemic. Local resources and practices are to be kept in mind while addressing the issue of density.

Finding new space
Finding new space to avoid density and staggering of students is another option available i.e. within the existing school or outside the premises of institution.

Different strokes
In the end, the best approach will be depending on what's right for specific schools and their local communities, while keeping in view, that students should be layered in rows with 6 feet distance from each other in a class room

Infrastructure criteria

How many toilets should school premises require
The regulations don't specify a minimum number of school toilets and washbasins in relation to the number and age of the children at the school. There are however, as per international recommended guidelines (for the developed countries), the institutions should have one toilet and wash bin for every 10 pupils for children aged under 5, for 5-11 one toilet and bin for 20 pupil and over 11 one toilet for every 20 pupils. However, in our context the provincial and district education department in consultation with the local Government, can ensure the standard of the toilet numbers for the provision of the WASH facility in the schools.

The other international recommendations are

Toilets for Teachers and School Staff
Staff toilets and washbasins must be separate from pupils' toilet facilities, except where they are designed for use by those who are disabled. Staff toilets may also be used for visitors

The international requirement for the toilets per students table at annex-2

Minimum Classroom Size and Number of Students Per Classroom:
According to the international standard guidelines for the developing countries we may consider the measure of minimum social distance among two persons, as a means for calculating minimum size of a classroom. The lower middle range for social distance in men and women is at-least 7 feet which provides a guideline for design and planning. The calculations for elementary school students were determined according to social distance research findings by using the factor of 49 square feet per person (The lower middle range). Bigger students, according to the social distance concept require 64 square feet (The upper limit of the middle range for social distance)

The recommended size of the elementary school classroom is approximately 900 Square feet. If policy allows 20 students per teacher, then with social distance as a guide, it is estimated to have 1029 square

feet per classroom. However, these *size estimates should be taken only as a broader reference* by the education department to have maximum benefit for measuring the adequate possible class room size for the students and local context should prevail on decision making. Standard Table for Minimum Classroom Size is Annexed for reference.

Ventilation

Classrooms and other school spaces must be ventilated to remove airborne droplets and pollutants. In general, this can be done with open windows and cross ventilation systems.

Closed system (e.g. air conditioning) is to be avoided in general but if outside air is provided through a mechanical system (including air conditioning), then at least 15 cubic feet per minute (cfm) of outside air must be provided for each occupant (A typical classroom with 30 people requires a minimum of 15 x 30 or 450 cfm of outside air). Appropriate and high-quality filters must be used in air conditions which should have proper disinfection protocols in place.

Epidemiological Criteria

Surveillance at the school level and criteria for temporary closure

Surveillance for screening and active detection of COVID 19 cases at the school/educational institute level is proposed to be conducted as a routine function. The screening is proposed to be based on the established protocols of screening that include **fever screening** through Thermal guns/instruments, and inquiry about contact with a confirmed COVID 19 case, and symptoms experienced during the last two weeks. The suggested symptoms to be inquired include questions related to cough, sore throat, fever, body aches, loss of smell, loss of taste and flu like symptoms. In case of suspected cases identified in process there should be an established referral system for appropriate medical advice by a qualified medical practitioner. The district education authorities with support of district health department and district administration are required to conduct visit of **school once a month** for monitoring the adherence

of the SOPs including social distancing, adherence to face masks, WASH facilities, and preventing gatherings/crowding. Furthermore, information of any identified/lab confirmed cases occurrence, and adherence by school authorities for recommended quarantine and isolation of cases and their contacts respectively, observance of 5 days school closure and disinfection of premises will be inquired/recorded.

A sentinel screening protocol for all institutions has to be followed by each school and will be implemented by local health and education departments. The summary of protocol in annexed with the guidelines (Annex).

In the scenario that there is **one COVID 19 positive case identified in a class**, the class is proposed to be closed for a minimum of **5 days** with suggested procedures of disinfection to be done on the premises. All fellow students and staff members who were part of the same class/came in contact with the identified case(s) are to be self-quarantined for 14 days , while the identified case is to follow home-isolation along with their families until the isolation is suggested to be lifted, as per the developed guidelines/SOPs for COVID 19 quarantine and isolation.

In the scenario that there are **two or more COVID cases identified in more than one classes**, the school is proposed to be closed for a minimum of **5 days** with suggested procedures of disinfection to be done

on the premises. All fellow students and staff members who were part of the same class/came in contact with the identified case(s) are to be self-quarantined, while the identified case is to follow home-isolation, as per the developed guidelines/SOPs for COVID 19 quarantine and isolation Those classes that have not

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have an identified case can resume didactic activities after the disinfection procedures at the school premises and the passage of 5 days. Furthermore, the district administration needs to trigger the TTQ strategy for the immediate contacts of the identified case(s) at the family and community level.

The decisions to close schools for in-person learning should be made together by local officials – including school administrators and public health officials in a manner that is transparent for students, staff, parents, caregivers and guardians, and all community members. The community prevalence and spread along with the school opening mitigation strategies are Annexed (Annex-3)

Guidance for Primary and Secondary level institutions

Guiding Principles

1. The National guidelines suggests the SOPs and guidance for the reopening of education Institutes, however, the provinces and regions are required to adopt a cascading/phase-wise approach as deemed appropriate by the provincial departments of education and the district education authorities.
2. The number of students and classes reopening in a staggered manner is to be decided by the respective provinces. However, some considerations for staggered opening of schools may be considered such as six days educational week with lesser hours per day, staggered opening of classes with alternate days sessions (each section split to 50% strength), morning/evening shifts or may be 3 days classes for each half of class instead of alternate days.
3. Cyclic difference in academic calendar (regions with long winter break) should be considered as part of the education curriculum and plan of re-opening, keeping in view the virus behavior in accordance with the weather. The possible options can be Hybrid learning or giving the home works to students in order to cover the academic gap if there is a surge in the number of COVID cases in the area. This is applicable for regions where there are long winter holidays (mountainous/higher altitude terrains in the country where there are harsh winter months) viz a viz in regions where there are long summer holidays and shorter winter holidays. Consideration of staggering the volume of curricula, needs to be reviewed from the context of *staggering the contents across two or more academic years*, while keeping in consideration the loss of didactic engagement during the current academic year, and in view of the remaining duration of the current academic year and hours of daily engagement etc.
4. As a principal the more student or staff members interact with each other and longer the duration, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread: Risk categorization is as follows:
• **Lowest Risk**: Students and teachers engage in virtual-only classes, activities, and events.
• **Moderate Risk**: Small, in-person classes, activities, and events. Groups of students stay together and with the same teacher throughout/across school days and groups do not mix. Students remain at least 6 feet apart and do not share objects (e.g., hybrid model of virtual and in-person teaching sessions, or staggered/rotated scheduling to accommodate smaller class sizes).
• **Highest Risk**: Full sized, in-person classes, activities, and events. Students are not spaced apart, share classroom materials or supplies, and mix between classes and activities.

Rural Area educational institutions

The Rural Schools should follow the SOPs for social distancing and Infection prevention Control measures including placement of desks/benches/seating 6 feet apart for in-door classes; with possible

consideration of conduct of classes with similar distancing measures in the open if weather and conditions permit. If there is no furniture in the schools then the mats may be placed in a manner so that pupils sit 6 feet apart. This should be accompanied with the proper disinfection measures taken after the use or end of the day for the mats and flooring.

Promoting Behaviors that Reduce Spread

Schools may consider implementing several strategies to encourage behaviors that reduce the spread of COVID-19.

- Staying home when appropriate. Any positive student, staff or any person who has positive contact-case at home must not attend the school.
- Educate staff and parents of students about when they/their children should stay home, who are sick or who have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19 and if they have tested positive and when they can return to school.
- Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquettes such as coughing and sneezing in a handkerchief/tissue
- Teach and reinforce handwashing with soap for at least 20 seconds and use of hand sanitizer that contains at least 70% alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer).
- Parents should ensure the provision of the hand sanitizers within the bags of the children where feasible.
- The principal of social distancing at all times

Cloth Face Coverings and face masks

- Use of face masks should be mandatory and students should be taught about the proper use of masks
- Where face masks are not available/feasible teach and reinforce the use of cloth face coverings. Students should be frequently reminded not to touch the face covering and to wash their hands frequently.

Note: Cloth face coverings should not **be placed on:**

- Children younger than 2 years old
- Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious
- Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance.

Adequate Supplies

- Support healthy hygiene behaviors by providing adequate supplies, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 70 percent alcohol content, paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes, face masks, cloth face coverings (as feasible) and no-touch/foot-pedal trash cans.

Sign postings and Messages

- Post signs in visible locations (e.g., school entrances, restrooms) that promote everyday protective measures.
- Broadcast regular announcements on reducing the spread of COVID-19

- Include messages (for example videos and printed brochures) about behaviors that prevent the spread of COVID-19 when communicating with staff and parents (such as on school websites, in emails, and on school social media accounts)

Maintaining Healthy Environments

Schools may consider implementing several strategies to maintain healthy environments.

Cleaning and Disinfection
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces (e.g., playground equipment, door handles, sink handles, drinking fountains) within the school and on school buses at least daily or between use as much as possible. Use of shared objects (e.g., gym or physical education equipment, art supplies, toys) should be limited where possible or cleaned between use.
- If transport vehicles (e.g., buses) are used by the school, drivers should practice all safety actions and protocols as indicated for other staff (e.g., hand hygiene, cloth face coverings). Clean and disinfect school buses or other transport vehicles,
- Develop a schedule for increased routine cleaning and disinfection at every 4-6-hour intervals.
- Cleaning products should be stored away from the children, should not be used near children, and staff should ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products to prevent children or themselves from inhaling toxic fumes.

Ventilation
- Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example by opening windows and doors.
- Keep windows of the school vans open

Water Systems
- Encourage staff and students to bring their own water to minimize use and touching of water taps/ fountains. However regular sanitization of taps and other sources at school should be carried out.

Modified Layouts
- Space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart.
- Turn desks or seating arrangements to face in the same direction (rather than facing each other), or have students sit on only one side of tables, spaced apart.
- Create distance between children in school vans/transport (e.g., seat children one child per row, skip rows) where possible.

Physical Barriers and Guides
- Install physical barriers, such as plastic or glass partitions, particularly in areas where it is difficult for individuals to remain at least 6 feet apart (e.g., reception desks).
- Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to ensure that staff and children remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times (e.g. guides for creating "one-way routes" in hallways).

Communal Spaces
- Stagger break time so that not all children are given break together.
- Add physical barriers, such as plastic flexible screens, between bathroom sinks especially when they cannot be at least 6 feet apart.

Food Service
- Have children bring their own meals as feasible or serve individually plated meals in classrooms instead of in a communal dining hall or cafeteria, while ensuring the safety of children with food allergies.
- It is preferred to close the School Canteens in the first instance but in case these are opened up at occasions proper SOPs should be followed
- Use disposable food service items (e.g., utensils, dishes). If disposable items are not feasible or desirable, ensure that all non-disposable food service items are handled with gloves and washed with dish washing soap and hot water or in a dishwasher. Individuals should wash their hands after removing their gloves or after directly handling used food service items.

Provisions for proper waste disposal
Two non-manual, double bagged waste bin with cover lid should be provided in every class for proper disposal of the used masks and any disposable material that comes in direct contact with the students.
The School should have arrangement for the proper disposal of the waste that is collected from the classroom bins on a daily basis, while regular disinfection of the waste bins should be done regularly.

Maintaining Healthy Operations

Schools may consider implementing several strategies to maintain healthy operations

Protections for Staff and Children at Higher Risk for Severe Illness from COVID-19
- Offer options for staff at higher risk for severe illness that limit their exposure risk (e.g., telework, modified job responsibilities) each school/college should have clear SOPs for such instances.
- Offer options for students at higher risk of severe illness that limit their exposure risk (e.g., virtual learning opportunities), each school/college should have clear SOPs for such instances.
- Put in place policies to protect the privacy of people at higher risk for severe illness regarding underlying medical conditions, that are consistent with applicable laws.

Regulatory Awareness
- Be aware of local or state regulatory agency policies related to group gatherings to determine if events can be held.

Gatherings, Visitors, and Field Trips
- Pursue virtual group events, gatherings, or meetings.

- Limit any nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations as much as possible – especially with individuals who are not from the local geographic area (e.g., community, town, city, county).
- Pursue options to convene sporting events and participation in sports activities in ways that minimizes the risk of transmission of COVID-19 to players, families, coaches, and communities.

Identifying Small Groups and Keeping Them Together (Cohorting)
- Ensure that student and staff groupings are as static as possible by having the same group of children stay with the same staff (all day for young children, and as much as possible for older children).
- Limit mixing between groups.

Designated COVID-19 Point of Contact
- Designate a staff person to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns as a focal person of school/institution (e.g., **school nurse if available**). All school staff and families should know about this focal person and how to contact them. The designated focal person (Nurse) must ensure adherence to social distancing, infection prevention measures, triggering mechanisms in case of any positive case(s) or suspected case(s) in school.

Communication Systems
- Notifying staff, families, and the public of school closures and any restrictions in place to limit COVID-19 exposure (e.g., limited hours of operation).

Leave (Time Off) Policies and Excused Absence Policies
- Implement flexible sick leave policies and practices that enable staff to stay home when they are sick, have been exposed, or caring for someone who is sick.

Staff and Students Training
- Train staff and students on all safety protocols.
- Conduct training virtually or ensure that social distancing is maintained during training.

Recognize Signs and Symptoms
- If feasible, conduct daily health checks (e.g., temperature screening and/or or symptom checking) of staff and students.
- Health checks should be conducted safely and respectfully, and in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations.

Support Coping and Resilience
- Encourage employees and students to take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories about COVID-19, including social media if they are feeling overwhelmed or distressed.
- Promote employees and students eating healthy, exercising, getting sleep, and finding time to unwind.
- Encourage employees and students to talk with people they trust about their concerns and how they are feeling.
- Communicate with staff, teachers, students, and families of students and teachers, about mental health support services.
- Parents and families should educate children at home

- o To follow the SOPs for social distancing and IPC s
- o Provide psychological support and counselling to deal with any emerging situation of schools and regarding the epidemic.
- o Provide knowledge about resilience in an emergency situation of emerging cases within the class/school/institute and if they themselves get infected.

Preparing for When Someone Gets Sick

Schools may consider implementing several strategies to prepare for when someone gets sick.

Advise Staff and Families of Sick Students of Home Isolation Criteria

- Isolate and Transport Those Who are Suspected or tested positive for SARs-CoV 2.
- Make sure that staff and families know that they (staff) or their children (families) should not come to school, and that they should notify to school officials.
- Immediately separate staff and children with COVID-19 symptoms (such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath) at school. Individuals who are sick should go home or to a healthcare facility depending on how severe their symptoms.
- Work with school administrators, nurses, and other healthcare providers to identify an isolation room or area to separate anyone who has COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive but does not have symptoms. School nurses and other healthcare providers should use Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions when caring for sick people.
- Establish procedures for safely transporting anyone who is sick to their home or to a healthcare facility.

Clean and Disinfect
- Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use until cleaned and disinfected.
- Ensure safe and correct use and storage of including storing products securely away from children.

Notify Health Officials and Close Contacts
- School administrators should notify local health officials, staff, and families immediately of any case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality in accordance.
- Inform those who have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home and self-monitor for symptoms

Guidance for Child Care Programs

Child care programs during the COVID-19 pandemic should address these additional considerations:

- Implement social distancing strategies
- Intensify cleaning and disinfection efforts
- Modify drop off and pick up procedures
- Implement screening procedures up arrival

- Maintain an adequate ratio of staff to children to ensure safety. Plan and recruit those with child care experience to ensure you have a roster of substitute caregivers who can fill in if your staff members are sick or stay home to care for sick family members.
- All staff and when feasible, older children should wear face coverings within the facility. Cloth face coverings should NOT be put on babies and children under two years of age because of the danger of suffocation.

Guidance for the Institutions of Higher Education - IHE (Colleges/ Universities/Institutes/Academies)

IHE General Settings

Lowest Risk: Faculty and students engage in virtual-only learning options, activities, and events.

Moderate Risk: Small in-person classes, activities, and events. Individuals remain spaced at least 6 feet apart and do not share objects (e.g., hybrid virtual and in-person class structures or staggered/rotated scheduling to accommodate smaller class sizes).

Highest Risk: Full-sized in-person classes, activities, and events. Students are not spaced apart, share classroom materials or supplies, and mix between classes and activities.

SOPs for the IHE

The general principals are the same for IHEs as described for other types of institutions

- Principals of staggering and de densification are equally applicable in the context of IHEs
- Social distancing and IPC measures are same as applicable for primary and secondary schools. Special Consideration should be given to avoid clustering of students during the Group work-based assignments/classes, in libraries, in laboratory-based studies, Computer rooms and for the accommodation such as in hostels/dormitories.
- Emphasis should be given on E-learning, especially for the multiple sources of learning and where Cohorting is not possible.
- Seating organization of the IHE should be similar to the School guidelines, however gathering/clustering in areas like gyms, sporting spaces and swimming pools at the College and university level should be avoided.

Guidance for Vocational Training Institutes

The activities are mostly carried out in the class room, and the vocational workshop/training areas

The class room seating and the social distancing measures should be considered as specified for the School class rooms settings

The skilled workshops should align with the SOPs in accordance with the laboratory-based classes and libraries.

Guidance for Madarris and Religious Education Institutions

The general principals are the same for Madarris as described for other types of institutions

- The didactic activities in Madarris are mostly carried out in a prayer hall setting with floor mat/carpet-based seating of children and teachers and common use of folding Grills for placement of the Holy Quran and other religious text books. Keeping in view the loud recitation and common arrangements of seating, the SOPs for adherence to essential wearing of face masks and sitting of a minimum of 6 feet apart is required to minimize the potential risk of cross infections.
- Adherence to practices of hand hygiene by pupils and teachers are also a key practice to be adopted during the Madarris teaching hours.
- Quite commonly there is limited space in small masajid/mosques across the urban and rural settings of the country. To avoid crowding and to ensure the seating of pupils 6 feet apart, the number of pupils to be taught together/simultaneously is to be made on a local basis, and in line with the instructions and guidance of Wifaq-ul-Madarris and in view of these SOPs and guidelines. Staggering and phasing options need to be considered.
- The salah and classes should be encouraged to be held in the open areas in the verandas, while the Madarris may prefer to minimize the use of carpets for the sitting and the offering prayers and if necessary, the mats can be used. Protocols for disinfection of matting/carpeting needs to be adhered to on a 4-6 hours intervals as applicable for schools. Screening of pupils for symptoms and fever, needs to be adhered to in line with the SOPs for schools and IHEs.
- Emphasis should be placed on the adequate PPEs supplies, including soap, cloth face coverings (as feasible).

Guidance for Hostel Accommodation

Hostels must commit strongly to risk management and lead in the systematic implementation of measures to minimizing risk.

Management team
The management of the hostels/residences should adopt a responsible attitude to address the health threat of COVID-19.
Team must:
- Establish mechanisms for gathering information to make the best decisions (consultation with authorities).
- Establish a coordination method
- Plan the implementation of a contingency plan.
- The supervision of compliance with the recommendations and guidelines issued by health authorities regarding special measures due to COVID-19, both hostel staff and the students, as well as the additional measures contained in the contingency plan that should be based on a risk assessment.

- Hostels must establish the actions needed to acquire resources, as identified in the risk assessment and the contingency plan, always taking into account the health authority recommendations (e.g. masks, gloves).

Service requirements

Entrance area

The following preventive measures must be enforced: -
- Hand sanitizer and disinfectant spray should be used on arrival of the hostels
- Thermal guns should be used to monitor body temperature at the entrance.
- Face masks should be worn.
- The minimum safe distance between students must be ensured by installing visible distance markers to avoid crowding.

General requirements for Kitchen/Cafeteria/Mess services

The following preventative measures must be enforced, whether there is a kitchen for students use or a mess service offered by the hostel:

Dining area
- A maximum permissible strength in terms of numbers must be established in the dining area so that safe distances between students is followed.
- Hand sanitizers must be made available to students in the dining area so that they can disinfect their hands when they enter.
- Decorative elements and self-service products (napkin holders, toothpicks, oil and vinegar bottles ketchup) must be removed from tables, prioritizing single-dose products or their service in other formats at the request of the students.
- Disposable items must be used if possible, including table linen
- The buffet system must be avoided, except where measures are put in place to avoid crowding, maintain a safe distance and avoid handling shared-use items.
- Consult with local health officials to determine strategies for modifying food service offerings to mess/cafeteria.
- Consider ways to distribute food to students, particularly those who may remain on campus, while classes or other events and activities are dismissed.
- If there is minimal to moderate or substantial community spread of COVID-19, design strategies to avoid food distribution in settings where people might gather in a group or crowd. Consider options such as grab-and-go/take away bagged lunches or meal delivery.
- If on-campus housing residents have been relocated to temporary alternative housing, consider how meals can be provided to these students. Work with local public health officials to determine strategies for providing meals to residents with COVID-19 or who are being monitored because of contact with persons with COVID-19.
- Ensure any staff remaining on campus to support food services receive necessary training to protect themselves and those they serve from spread of COVID-19
- All kitchen and service staff be tested for COVID-19 fortnightly and screened for symptoms on daily basis.

- Cafeteria, breakfast, and dining room and bar staff should perform personal hygiene (frequent regular handwashing, cough hygiene) as strictly as possible.

Table setting

Whenever possible, it is recommended to have a maximum of 4 persons for 10 square meters. Tables shall be arranged such that the distance from the back of one chair to the back of another chair shall be more than 1 m apart and that students face each other from a distance of at least 1 m.

Rooms SOPs

General requirements
- The hostel must try to arrange beds and bedrooms in such a way as to allow for a period of "rest" between one another, if possible. In all cases, they must be cleaned and disinfected.
- Hand sanitizer must be available at the entrance to bedrooms.
- Disinfectant mats must be placed at the entrance to bedrooms.
- Shared bedrooms or dormitories
  o In all cases, beds must be arranged in rooms to respect the minimum safe distance or accepted social isolation distances of 6 feet or 2 students in a normal sized room
  o Students in shared rooms or dormitories must be encouraged to make their own beds, and not touch the beds or bunk beds of other students.
- Students must be provided their packaged bed linen, thus guaranteeing the students that it is clean and avoiding contamination if other students use or touch the bunk prior to their arrival.
- A non-manual, double bagged waste bin must be provided. Providing a cupboard/shelf to store students shoes outside bedrooms is recommended.
  o Private bedrooms: Blankets and pillows in wardrobes must be protected.
  o Toilets must have a non-manual, bagged waste bin.

Shared toilets and showers
- The hostel must define and implement the system to ensure safe distances between students, who must be informed of this system.
- The hostel toilet and shower services must comply with the following measures:
  o have gel and paper towel dispensers;
  o no mats;
  o have hand sanitizer or sanitizer dispensers.
  o Appropriate footwear is recommended for use in shared showers.
  o Toilets must be cleaned and disinfected at least 4 times a day i.e. every 4-6 hours.

Public areas
The hostel must identify the maximum occupancy of the different shared areas and establish a system for monitoring occupancy to guarantee safe distancing.
- The hostel must have hand sanitizers in high-traffic areas and facilities.
- Bins must be non-manual and bagged.
- The hostel must dispose of products and items left by students who leave the hostel.

- Hostels must ensure students to respect safe distances. If this is not possible, students must be informed of the need to wear a mask and, where appropriate, whether students must bring masks with them.
- Consumables must be replaced as needed (soap, paper towels, etc.).
- Paper, gel and soap dispensers should be cleaned periodically, depending on the level of use.
- If a lift is available, the hostel must determine and inform students of its maximum capacity. People from different family units/groups will not share a lift, unless masks are used.

Cleaning and disinfection requirements

- Hostels must adapt their cleaning and disinfection plan taking into account the risks identified in the assessment. The plan should at least consider:
- More frequent cleaning and disinfection, and wiping, especially in areas of greatest contact
- The cleaning plan must specifically address the cleanliness and hygiene of shared showers and toilets (where applicable). Frequency must be increased at least in these facilities according to their use, ensuring there are no wet areas, emptying bins daily, disinfecting surfaces, etc. The establishment must pay special attention to cleaning and disinfecting shared areas.
- Ventilating shared areas daily.

Room cleaning requirements
- Bedroom cleaning requirements
- Bedrooms must be cleaned and disinfected in safe conditions, avoiding the presence of students. The hostel must determine a daily time slot for deep-cleaning bedrooms without the presence of students.
- Room cleaning during the COVID-19 emergency must specifically provide for daily ventilation and replacement of towels and bed linen (at each student departure and at least once every three days for the same students).
- Additionally, special attention will be given to the following:
  - Cleaning walls, floors, mirrors and windows, furniture, equipment and decorative and functional elements.
  - Cleaning any surface or equipment with a high level of use.

Textile cleaning
The following requirements must be enforced:
- Dirty or used textiles should be collected, put in a bag and closed until handling at the laundry.
- Avoid shaking used textiles. In the case of linens, avoid placing them on the room or bathroom floor.
- Personnel should wash their hands after handling used textiles.
- Used textiles must be washed at >60º. If the laundry service is outsourced, the service provider must be informed of the minimum required temperature.
- A systematic approach must be defined to avoid cross-contamination, placing clean linens only after the room has been cleaned and disinfected. Used laundry must be bagged before being placed for cleaning.

Cross Cutting Issues

Parent Drop-Off and Pick-Up
- Hand hygiene stations should be set up at the entrance of the facility,
- Consider staggering arrival and drop off times and plan to limit direct contact with parents as much as possible.
- Minimum entry and exit points for students, for which time can be staggered across 30 min intervals among the classes to enter and leave, so as to avoid clustering of the students
- Ideally, the same parent or designated person should drop off and pick up the child every day. Older people such as grandparents or those with serious underlying medical conditions should not pick up children, because they are more at risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- If parents cannot pick and drop then the designated school van or bus should follow the transport guidelines and maintain a distance when children sit in the van/bus, must use mask and gloves during travel and must use the hand sanitizer before entering the vehicle.

Screen Children/students
Persons who have a fever of 38.0^0C or above or other signs of illness should not be admitted to the facility. Encourage parents to be on the alert for signs of illness in their children and to keep them home when they are sick. Screen children upon arrival using one of following approaches:

Reliance on Social Distancing
- Parents/guardians to take their child's temperature either before coming to the facility or upon arrival at the facility. Upon their arrival, stand at least 6 feet away from the parent/guardian and child.
- The parent/guardian confirm that the child does not have fever, shortness of breath or cough.
- Make a visual inspection of the child for signs of illness which could include flushed cheeks, rapid breathing or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity), fatigue, or extreme fussiness.

Reliance on Barrier/Partition Controls
- Stand behind a physical barrier, such as a glass or plastic window or partition that can serve to protect the staff member's face and mucous membranes from respiratory droplets that may be produced if the child being screened sneezes, coughs, or talks. Check the child's temperature, reaching around the partition or through the window.

Reliance on Personal Protective Equipment
If social distancing or barrier/partition controls cannot be implemented during screening, personal protective equipment (PPE) can be used. However, **reliance on PPE alone is a less effective control and more difficult to implement, given PPE shortages and training requirements**

Testing might be needed
Students or staff may need a COVID-19 test, should consult with local health officials (Annex)
- Testing asymptomatic individuals with recent known or suspected exposure to COVID-19.
- Testing individuals with signs or symptoms consistent with COVID-19
- Sentinel testing of all or selected groups of individuals in consultation with local health officials

Assembly
- Assembly is highly discouraged as it will result in the Clustering of the all class at one time
- Every class can have their own morning prayer/anthem recitation separately in their classrooms

Library use

Guiding principals
- School/institute library rooms/building should be reopened for limited services using extra precautions after prior risk assessment.
- Library hours should be limited from Monday-Friday i.e. 10am-1pm / 2pm-5pm and 1pm-2pm with regular and extra cleaning of high traffic areas.
- Every four hours highly touched surfaces should be cleaned
- Protective Gear must be in place before opening the library
  - Gloves
  - Masks
  - Disinfecting Wipes
  - Disinfecting Spray
  - Hand Sanitizer
  - Computer Keyboard Covers (for easy cleaning)
- limited number of students should attend the library for a set schedule and maintain social distancing of 6 feet.
- Use face mask/covering before entering the library
- Ensure the use of hand sanitizers and temperature scanning at the door of the library
- Two students should be allowed per desk not facing each other, also rotate hours
- Blue tape used to mark safe social distancing space for check out / browsing areas.
- One-way arrows for stack space.
- Books can be issued for the home reading and returned items/Books checked back while adhering to the following recommendations
  - Staff wears gloves when giving away/issuing or receiving books.
  - Gloves remain on when bringing books back into the building and placing them in books quarantine room/area which may be set up in a separate corner or isolated reading room if available.
  - Gloves removed immediately after handling books and hands must be washed following Hand Washing SOPs
  - After 48 hours the items can be checked in and re-shelved. Gloves are not necessary at this point; it is recommended that staff wash hands after each interaction with returned books.
  - Copier and fax should be sanitized after each use.

Computer rooms
- The computer rooms can be reopened with a specified time table for everyone to be able to use the computer and be able to simultaneously avoid any clustering.

- Computer terminals should be reopening with safe social distancing
- Users are limited to one, one-hour session per day. Each station should have an easy to clean keyboard cover and should be sanitized after every individual's use.

Laboratory

General Guidance
All laboratories should perform site- and activity-specific risk assessments to determine the most appropriate safety measures to implement for circumstances.
Schools should adhere to local policies and procedures as well as all applicable federal, Provincial and local regulations and public health guidelines.
The shifting and the weekly time table should be adjusted by the head of school/institute to prevent the crowding, e.g. twice weekly lab visit schedules for the students to prevent crowding that are timed apart for different classes/sections/grades across the work week.
Risk assessments should include the following considerations:
- Analyze the number of people that the laboratory space can realistically and safely accommodate while maintaining social distancing of 6 feet
- Assess the flow of personnel traffic. Where possible, design one-way paths for staff to walk through the laboratory space.
- Assess procedures for cleaning and sanitizing commonly shared equipment and areas—for example, counters, benchtops, and desks—to ensure clean surfaces and equipment for all users.
- Review emergency communication and operational plans, including how to protect staff at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- Every institution should have a COVID-19 health and safety plan to protect the students and the teachers. Reinforce training on Proper handwashing practices.

Social Distancing
- To the extent possible, adhere to social distancing recommendations by adjusting school Laboratory schedules, adding additional shifts, or implementing non-overlapping teams to minimize personnel contact.
- Identify laboratory tasks and activities that can be performed with reduced or no face-to-face interactions.
- To prevent the staggering reconfigure Laboratory locations of shared equipment to reduce crowding. Create one-directional paths and workflows.
- **Declutter workstations** and dispose of unnecessary items to help with reconfiguration. If reconfiguration is not possible, consider placing barriers (plexiglass, partition, plastic, etc.) between computer workstations, desks, or equipment that position students six feet apart from each other.

Personal Hygiene and Disinfection
- High-touch locations and equipment with a high frequency of handling and contact present a higher probability of contamination in the work area and should be disinfected frequently.
-
- Use visual reminders, such as posters displayed throughout the laboratory environment, common areas, and restrooms, to emphasize the importance of hand hygiene and to encourage frequent handwashing.

Hands should be washed regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. An alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least70% alcohol content can be used when soap and water are not available

Note: The above recommendations are being regularly reviewed by the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination and will be updated based on the international & national recommendations and best practices.

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For more information, please contact:

HSA/ HPSIU/ NIH, PM National Health Complex, Islamabad
http://covid.gov.pk/
http://nhsrc.gov.pk/   https://www.facebook.com/NHSRCOfficial
http://www.hsa.edu.pk/   https://twitter.com/nhsrcofficial
https://www.nih.org.pk/   https://www.youtube.com/NHSRC-PK

Rapid Assessment of Educational Facilities
Basic Information

Type of educational institute:
Primary/secondary school, college, university, madrassah, other
Origin:
Public sector, private sector, trust
Location*:*
Province, District, Tehsil, UC, Address
Name of educational institute:
Institution established since: *In years*

Assessment
Density of children per classroom area

Total number of children/students	
Total number of classrooms	
Average sq2 size of a classroom (sq2)	
Possibility of seating area, furniture/seating placement in classrooms	(YES/NO)
Possibility of floor markings in hallways, open spaces, stairwells etc. to identify positional spacing between students	(YES/NO)

Ventilation

Does all classrooms have windows for cross ventilation (at least 2 windows that can be opened)	(YES/NO)
A/C system	(YES/NO)

Possibility of open-air classes

Total outdoor area that can be used for teaching (sq/ft)	

Possibility of meaningful remote learning

Adequate Internet access in the institution	(YES/NO)
Catchment area of educational institute have adequate internet access	(YES/NO)
More than 50% of children/students have internet access at homes, through mobile phone, local service providers or other means	(YES/NO)

Toilet and hand washing:

Toilets

Total number of latrines in school	
Running water in all toilets	(YES/NO)

Hand washing place

Total number of hands washing points in school	

Number of handwashing points where soap is available	
Number of handwashing points where enough running water is available	
Number of handwashing points accessible to class 1 & 2 students	

The Checklist will be completed by the district administration authorities in liaison the Education department.

Toilets

Age of pupils	No. of Toilets
Under 5	1 toilet & washbasin for every 10 pupils
5-11	1 toilet & washbasin for every 20 pupils
Over 11	1 toilet for every 20 pupils*

*washbasins may be reduced where facilities are shared
*Source: The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 legislation's Approved Code of Practice. If you want more information on workplace toilet facilities and the legislation surrounding it, please

Standard for Classroom Size		
Number of Students plus 1 Teacher	**Secondary School [Square Feet (Meters)]**	**Elementary School [Square Feet (Meters)**
10	539 (50.13)	704 (65.47)
11	564 (52.45)	768 (71.42
12	637 (59.24)	832 (77.38)
13	686 (63.80)	896 (83.33)
14	735 (68.36)	960 (89.28
15	784 (72.91)	1024 (95.23)
16	833 (77.47)	1088 (101.18)
17	882 (82.03)	1152 (107.14)
18	931 (86.58)	1216 (113.09)
19	980 (91.14)	1280 (119.04)
20	1029 (95.70)	1344 (124.99)

Standard for Classroom Size

Government of Pakistan
Ministry of National Health Services,
Regulations & Coordination

Mitigation Strategies- Institutions of Higher Education

Mitigation Strategies for child care programs and schools is organized into these categories based on the level of community transmission:
1) When a confirmed case has entered a school, regardless of community transmission
2) When there is no community transmission (preparedness phase),
3) When there is minimal to moderate community transmission, and
4) When there is substantial community transmission.

When a confirmed case has been on campus, regardless of community transmission
- Coordinate with local health officials.
- Work with local public health officials to determine cancellation of classes and closure of buildings and facilities. IHE administrators should work closely with their local health officials to determine if a short-term closure (for 2-5 days) of all campus buildings and facilities is needed.
- Communicate with students, staff, and faculty.
- Clean and disinfect thoroughly.
- IHE administrators should work in close collaboration with health officials to make decisions about extending the class suspension and event and activity cancellation.
- Ensure continuity of education and research. Implement e-learning plans and distance learning options as feasible and appropriate.
- Ensure continuity of meal programs.
- Consider if, and when, to stop, scale back, or modify other support services on campus
- Ensure continuity of safe housing. Work in close collaboration with local public health officials to make all decisions related to on-campus housing.
- If cases of COVID-19 have not been identified among residents of on-campus community housing,
- If cases of COVID-19 have been identified among residents of on-campus community housing, work with local public health officials to take additional precautions.
- Residents identified with COVID-19 or identified as contacts of individuals with COVID-19 should not necessarily be sent to their permanent homes off-campus.
- Remember to consider all types of IHE-affiliated housing when making response plans.
- Ensure any staff remaining to support students in on-campus housing receive necessary training to protect themselves and residents from spread of COVID-19.

When there is no community transmission (preparedness phase)
- Review, update, and implement emergency operations plans (EOPs).
- Develop information-sharing systems with partners.
- Reinforce healthy hygiene practices.
- Intensify cleaning and disinfection efforts.
- Assess group gatherings and events. Consider postponing non-critical gatherings and events.
- Require sick students, staff, and faculty to stay home. Establish procedures for students, staff, and faculty who are ick (with any illness) on campus.
- Ensure IHE health clinics prepare for COVID-19.
- Create plans to communicate accurate and timely information to the IHE community.
- IHE administrators can support their IHE community by sharing COVID-19 informational resources
- For guidance for students, staff, or faculty who plan to travel, or have recently traveled, to areas with community spread of COVID-19.IHE can also consult with state and local public health officials.

When there is minimal to moderate community transmission
- Coordinate with local public health officials. Implement multiple social distancing strategies. Cancel large gatherings.
- Cancel or modify courses where students are likely to be in very close contact,
- Increase space between desks.
- Consider if and how existing dining services should be scaled back or adapted.
- Consider ways to accommodate the needs of students and staff at higher risk of severe illness with COVID-19.

When there is substantial community transmission
- Continue to coordinate with local public health officials.
- Consider extended in-person class suspension.

Mitigation Strategies- child care programs and schools

Mitigation Strategies for child care programs and schools is organized into these categories based on the level of community transmission:

1) When a confirmed case has entered a school, regardless of community transmission
2) When there is no community transmission (preparedness phase),
3) When there is minimal to moderate community transmission, and
4) When there is substantial community transmission.

1 When a confirmed case has entered a school, regardless of community transmission

Any school in any community might need to implement short-term closure procedures regardless of community spread **if an infected person has been in a school building**.

- Coordinate with local health officials.
- Dismiss students and most staff for 2-5 days.
- Communicate with staff, parents, and students.
- Clean and disinfect thoroughly.
- Make rational decisions about extending the school dismissal.
- Implement strategies to continue education and related supports for students.

2.When there is no community transmission (preparedness phase)

The most important thing to do now is to **plan and prepare**. Administrators should reinforce healthy practices among their students and staff. Schools need to **be ready** if COVID-19 does appear in their communities. Here are some strategies:

- Review, update, and implement emergency operations plans (EOPs).
- Develop information-sharing systems with partners.
- Teach and reinforce healthy hygiene practices.
- Intensify cleaning and disinfection efforts
- Monitor and plan for absenteeism.
- Assess group gatherings and events. Consider postponing non-critical gatherings and events
- Require sick students and staff to stay home. Establish procedures for students and staff who are sick at school.
- Create and test communications plans for use with the school community.

When there is minimal to moderate community transmission

If local health officials report that there are multiple cases of COVID-19 in the community, schools may need to implement additional strategies in response to prevent spread in the school, but they should continue using the strategies they implemented when there was no community transmission. These additional strategies include:

- Coordinate with local health officials.
- Consider ways to accommodate the needs of children and families at risk for serious illness from COVID-19.
- Implement multiple social distancing strategies **such as:**
o Cancel field trips, assemblies, and other large gatherings.
o Cancel or modify classes where students are likely to be in very close contact. For example, in physical education, in the gymnasium or music room.
o Increase the space between desks.
o Avoid mixing students in common areas.
o Stagger arrival and/or dismissal times. These approaches can limit the amount of close contact between students in high-traffic situations and times.
o Reduce congestion in the school health office.
o Limit nonessential visitors.
o Limit cross-school transfer for special programs.
o Teach staff, students, and their families to maintain distance from each other in the school.

When there is substantial community transmission

Additional strategies to those implemented when there is no, minimal, or moderate transmission includes:

- Continue to coordinate with local health officials.
- Consider extended school dismissals**.** -with extended e-learning