BACK TO SCHOOL

A TEACHERS GUIDE TO HELP SCHOOL COMMUNITIES MINIMISE THE RISK OF TRANSMISSION OF COVID-19 WITHIN LEARNING SPACES.

Introduction

According to the Ministry of Education (State Department of Early Learning and Basic Education, "Guidelines on Health and Safety Protocols for Reopening of Basic Education Institutions Amid COVID-19 Pandemic", September 2020) the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted learning for more than 1.5 billion learners worldwide including over 18 million Kenyan learners and trainees, which is a threat to attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 4 on access to quality, equitable and inclusive education. To curb the spread of the virus in learning institutions, the Government of the Republic of Kenya closed all learning institutions as of mid-March 2020.

COVID-19 has affected all our lives and will continue to do so for some time even as governments relax confinement restrictions. With uncertainty about timeframes, the impact of physical distancing and restricted or part-time attendance at school by students, the reopening of schools presents a unique opportunity for school communities (school leadership, teachers, committees, parents, and learners) to work together to ensure schools are ready to open and that students are able to learn. Everyone has a role to play before and after schools reopen.

As schools prepare to reopen, this document will help school communities to minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19 within learning spaces and address the learning inequalities and protection concerns exacerbated by COVID-19 school closures. It is therefore critical for seamless learning to ensure that learners do not lose out on essential learning time that could negatively impact their educational outcomes. As schools reopen, school administrators, teachers and relevant stakeholders, including the Government of Kenya, should put in place measures to protect the physical and mental health and safety of staff, students and their families.

Disclaimer

COVID-19 information and guidelines are constantly being updated. Any school using this document should refer to the latest resources and guidelines provided by the Government of Kenya when developing their school reopening plans. The information in this document is accurate as of October 2020.

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Reopening Schools

School administration needs to have clear plans in place for schools to be able to operate safely based on public health measures. This includes operational and logistical planning with teachers before schools potentially open to all students in January (depending on evolving COVID situation) as well as health and safety measures with teachers, students and the school community once schools reopen. Clear communication is critical for these measures to be determined and put in place as soon as possible.

Before Schools Reopen: Operational / Logistical Planning

Education systems and school administrators working with the Ministry of Education should put in place measures to protect the physical health and safety of staff, students and their families, as well as plan for the learning and wellbeing of students. Schools need to establish a Health and Hygiene Committee that will analyse the current situation and capability of each school and develop plans for the school's emergency response and communication procedures. As these policies will take time to develop, schools should begin this process as soon as possible. Such measures include the following:

01 Assessing Current Status

Understand what each school needs do to in order to prepare for students' return by understanding the current situation that each school is in.

- Establish a Health and Hygiene Committee with representatives of teachers, parents, student council, etc. to assess, discuss and implement relevant health measures in conjunction with MOE and MOH officials to determine school readiness

- Stay up to date with government health regulations and requirements

- Conduct a comprehensive rapid needs assessment on the readiness of schools to reopen by assessing the availability of teachers and teaching equipment, cleaning staff, WASH facilities and supplies, personal protective equipment (PPE) and physical space to ensure physical distancing, as per government guidelines

- Use the "Risk Assessment Matrix for Reopening of Educational Institutions" and "Education and Training Institutions Reopening Preparedness Assessment Tool" provided in the Ministry of Education's "Guidelines on Health and Safety Protocols for Reopening of Basic Education Institutions Amid COVID-19 Pandemic", September 2020.

02 Development of Emergency Response Plans

- Establish an escalation protocol for teachers and school management when they identify a student or colleague who displays symptoms of COVID-19; determine who needs to be contacted, when, and what measures will be taken to ensure everyone's safety

- Identify temporary isolation areas for children/school staff who may be infected to safely wait before receiving care

- Establish connections between the school's qualified nurse and local health facilities and personnel for quick, accessible medical referrals

- Establish hygiene and sanitation procedures of school premises and train all relevant staff members to conduct this sanitation regularly and properly

- Establish a communication plan for individuals in contact with an infected individual and in the case of a possible school shutdown

- Establish proper recording and reporting of COVID-19 cases and other health information management, as recommended by the government

- Develop a plan with budget, roles and responsibilities for promoting and ensuring cleanliness and regular disinfection

- Ensure adequate funding for the Emergency Response Plan, safety and hygiene supplies and measures.

03 Monitoring and Escalation Procedure

- School administration should plan to monitor and record student and teacher attendance records and follow-up with individuals for the reason for their absence

- Inform the head of school and local health officials if absences increase above average

- Work with local health care and government officials to share this information regularly and ensure that the required procedures are followed if cases increase or are above average for your region.

04 Communication Plan

- Develop and disseminate inclusive, age-appropriate education content on the prevention of COVID-19 and other safety measures to all students, teachers and families

- Ensure that messages are gender-sensitive and considerate of learners living with disabilities, and do not encourage stigmatisation or blame for those with COVID-19

- Develop and share posters and illustrations of good handwashing and personal hygiene practices to display and distribute when schools open

- Train school personnel on COVID-19 prevention, sanitation and escalation protocols

- Set up communication networks for teachers to share resources and tips with each other in person, on the phone and using the internet, where applicable

- Consult with teachers and other education personnel about concerns and ideas for a safe school reopening, including those who are not in the Health and Hygiene Committee

- Share procedures for school pick-up/drop-off and student journeys to/from school with parents and families and discourage use of public transportation where alternatives exist

- Ensure all students and families are aware of available health provisions at the school and what to do in case of COVID-19 symptoms when the child is at home or at school

- Encourage parents to keep children at home if they display symptoms or feel unwell

- Make sure all health procedures and communication materials are available in local languages and through various media for parents and families

- Set up regular communications with parents to ensure students' enrolment and attendance and include parents in improving the safety of the school community and in developing the school's reopening plans

- Collaborate with school sponsors and other stakeholders to ensure provision of psycho-social and spiritual support for students.

When Schools Reopen

Once schools reopen, school administrators must work with school staff, students, and their families to ensure that the school community works together to maintain a safe and healthy school environment. These procedures will need to be developed by the Health and Hygiene Committee and be in place before schools reopen, as they may require time and financial resources. This will ensure that the school environment will be immediately ready to welcome students and staff members. Such measures include the following:

School Sanitation and Hygiene

Schools are already locations that require regular cleaning and sanitation, but this has grown even more important and will require additional physical and financial resources. Where necessary, consider adding to the available school facilities or personnel to ensure that school sanitation is maintained.

- Ensure schools are cleaned, disinfected and fumigated regularly as per local health officials- especially schools and rooms that have been used as treatment or isolation centres

  ○ Furniture, doorknobs/handles, railings, faucets, sports equipment and learning/teaching materials should be cleaned daily

  ○ Schools should be cleaned throughout the day, not just at the end of each day

- Clean and disinfect features reserved for people with disabilities, including handrails/ramps, accessibility doorknobs, etc.

- Ensure there are an adequate number of handwashing and sanitation facilities with running water accessible to all children and faculty throughout the school premises

- Have necessary water and sanitation infrastructure available, including gender-separated toilets and handwashing stations, at a ratio of 1:30 for boys and a ratio of 1:25 for girls

- If possible, install water facilities with a foot operated tap or a tap that is operated by lifting, rather than turning

- Install floor/wall markers in restrooms and hallways to ensure students queue 1 metre apart (arm's length) from each other at all times

- Ensure adequate supplies of first aid kits, including masks, thermometers and temperature scanners/thermometer guns, rubbing alcohol for cleaning thermometers, etc. distributed throughout the school

- Conduct daily temperature checks before students and staff enter the school premises and keep records of suspicious cases; prevent access to anyone with a temperature over 37.5°C

- Set up separate entrances and exits for the school wherever possible with clear labels to reduce foot traffic in the school halls

- Ensure adequate provision of face masks and PPE for teachers and students.

Facilities Maintenance and Improvement

School facilities may not currently have the required equipment to ensure the aforementioned sanitation and hygiene protocols. It may be necessary to acquire additional resources.

- Ensure all buildings are ventilated and regularly fumigated

- Provide adequate seats and tables for each student, placed 1 metre away from each other, and arranged in rows so that students are not facing each other

- Provide adequate waste collection bins throughout the school property

- Provide compost pits at strategic points in the school property

- Ensure adequate physical distancing of at least 1 metre in boarding school dormitories (if relevant), including 1 bed per student

- Discourage the use of common areas and staffrooms to avoid large gatherings of individuals

- Monitor and control movement of people into and out of the school property, including all contact information for students, family members, staff and visitors

- Do not allow school facilities to be used for any non-educational purposes and restrict access to the school facilities to only students and school staff even when classes are not in session.

School Health and Nutrition

Monitoring and supporting student health is critical to ensuring that the student body remains safe. Regularly checking student symptoms and making sure that students do not fall ill due to non-COVID-related illnesses is also important.

- Monitor daily attendance of students and teachers and record health risks and symptoms

- Engage school escalation procedure when absences increase beyond average and if COVID-19 cases are detected and consider engaging School Shutdown Procedure

- Ensure safe food preparation and service by sensitising school cooks on hygiene, sanitation and safe food preparation in the schools

- Restart provisions of school meals or snacks as soon as possible to cater to students who did not have access to meals while away from school and encourage good health and school attendance

- Procure nutrient-enhanced school feeding supplies, if necessary

- Reopen school canteens with reduced capacity, ensure protection measures, staggered lunch hours, and hand washing before and after each meal

- Ensure that school canteens have safe water supply for drinking and hygiene, handwashing stations with soap, and proper waste disposal measures (e.g. trash bins, proper drainage)

- Identify teachers, staff, and students with pre-existing health conditions that may increase their vulnerability and ensure appropriate health measures are in place.

Maintaining Physical Distancing

Whilst schools only have a certain amount of physical space, maintaining physical distancing is one of the safest ways to reduce transmission of COVID-19. Use the available space in innovative ways to help students and staff keep their distance while still learning.

- Plan staggered school schedules or different class shifts (start/end times, recess, lunch breaks, etc.) for different groups of children to avoid overcrowding

- Implement reduced or amended class sizes to ensure physical distancing and prevent sharing of school materials between students

- Adapt classroom seating to ensure physical distancing at all times

- Monitor student movements to ensure small groups and stagger break times and toilet visits

- Develop a strategy to conduct safe school assemblies and prayers

- Prepare for blended learning combining physical class time with distance learning activities

- Provide additional school supplies such as pencils and notebooks so that students do not share

- Avoid activities and games that include physical contact and replace them with activities that can be done outdoors with at least 1-metre distance maintained between children

- Ensure teachers can remain physically distanced from each other and children

- Discourage parents from gathering at school gates or on the property.

Solving Understaffing Issues

During the school shut-down period, many teachers may have gotten involved in other forms of employment to support their families. Because of this or needs to take care of family members, some teachers may be unable to return to their teaching positions when schools reopen, leading to understaffing challenges that schools need to be prepared for.

● Assess how many students and teachers will be returning for the school year as well as the maximum number of students and teachers you can have in the school at a time while maintaining the recommended physical distancing guidelines

● Continue to recruit additional teachers, including qualified teachers serving under the BOM for understaffed schools

● Extend existing online classes to all schools and students

● Strengthen the existing community of practice.

Supporting Frontline Workers, Students and the Community

In addition to the physical resources required to reopen schools, taking care of human resources involved is of critical importance. School frontline workers and students will need support in order to transition back to school. Investing in their physical and mental wellbeing will ensure that the school community at large is healthy and will allow the school to continue to operate. In order to do this, school management and staff will need to follow measures to take care of themselves, to then take care of others and to further take care of the greater school community. Guidelines for doing so are as follows:

Taking Care of Myself

Frontline workers, including teachers, staff and anyone with a direct relationship to students at school, need to be supported and receive adequate information on how they can contribute to a safe return to school for themselves and all learners. Investing in teacher safety during the reopening phase will result in long-term benefits as teachers can act as community thought leaders to ensure safety, health and education continuity. The following are ideas for supporting the teachers and education support staff's wellbeing during school reopening:

01 Being Informed

COVID-19, the novel coronavirus, is a new respiratory illness caused by a virus that is spreading rapidly across the world. It can affect your breathing system - your lungs and airways - and can be spread from person to person through direct contact with germs that end up on the hands when infected persons cough or sneeze and by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching your face (eyes, nose, mouth, etc.)

Many people will recover after experiencing a period of sickness lasting between 1-2 weeks, but some people are at higher risk and may get seriously ill from COVID-19.
Symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 include:

| Headache | Muscle pain / fatigue | High temperature / fever | A new frequent cough | Shortness of breath / breathing difficulties | Loss of smell |

Note that people can be asymptomatic (do not show any symptoms and appear healthy) and for many people it can take days before they start showing any symptoms.

For more information about COVID-19, please visit the following websites:
https://www.who.int, www.health.go.ke, or www.kemri.org.

You may be at higher risk from COVID-19 if you:

● Are over the age of 70

● Have a suppressed immune system because you are receiving certain types of cancer treatment, have blood or bone marrow cancer, such as leukaemia, have a severe chronic lung condition, such as asthma or have a heart disease or diabetes.

02 Personal Physical Health Measures

Take care of your own physical health with the most stringent of guidelines and act as a healthy role model for others in the school community.

● Understand current information about COVID-19, including its symptoms, complications, how it is transmitted and how to prevent transmission from reputable sources such as UNICEF, WHO and national Health/Education ministry advisories

● Be aware of fake information or myths that may circulate by word-of-mouth or online

● Stay at home when sick or feeling unwell

● Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth

● Properly wear face masks that cover your nose and mouth when in public

● Cover your mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue when coughing or sneezing and dispose of used tissues immediately

● Avoid yelling/singing

● Do not share teaching/learning materials like books or pens with others

● Do not share food or utensils like plates or cups with others

● Avoid touching others or their belongings

● Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds several times per day (see posters in Appendix)

● Regularly clean frequently touched surfaces and objects

● Avoid eating unwashed or uncooked foods

● Avoid close contact with anyone with flu-like symptoms
Always keep a physical distance of at least 1 metre from other individuals

● Go home directly after school/work hours

● Immediately change out of "outside clothes" and shoes when you arrive home.

03 What to Do If You Have Symptoms

If you feel like you are getting sick for any reason, even if it may not be due to COVID-19, follow the determined procedure.

- Isolate yourself immediately and go to the hospital as soon as possible for a medical check-up and follow the determined Emergency Response Plan

- If it is not possible to go to the hospital for a check-up, isolate yourself for 14 days

- Ensure that all rooms and equipment that you previously used are disinfected

- Have all people who came in contact with you self-quarantine and get a medical check-up

- Avoid being around other people (including going to school) or taking public transportation

- Wear a mask to avoid potentially infecting others

- Inform your school/family that you have symptoms through the correct escalation procedures.

04 Psycho-Social Support for Frontline Workers

Frontline workers will need to take care of their mental health during their return to school, especially in light of their additional responsibilities, in order to take care of their students. For this reason, school staff should be attentive to their own psycho-social needs and manage their own stress and anxiety. School management should do the following to support their frontline workers:

- Conduct a rapid basic assessment of anxiety and trauma amongst teachers and staff members

- Help teachers maintain a routine and avoid sudden changes to their schedules

- Create peer networks and support groups for teachers to share their experiences and resources, strengthen their motivation, remain informed, and develop solutions together without using staffrooms

- Ensure teachers are aware of local resources for their own wellbeing including counselling and professional psycho-social support

- Develop sick-leave policies for staff members why may have to stay home when sick or to care for sick family members

- Provide adequate training for staff to take on different responsibilities

- Work with school health workers/social workers to identify and support staff who exhibit signs of distress

- Check-in on all teacher peer groups or teacher circles on a daily or weekly basis

- Ensure that COVID-19 strategies are age, gender, ethnicity, and disability-responsive
  Train all teachers and staff in:

  ○ Required health procedures and requirements (set-up, sanitation and cleaning, etc.) prior to school reopening

  ○ Coping mechanisms like breathing activities

  ○ Providing life skills, guidance and counselling to their students

  ○ Using blended and distance/remote learning techniques and technologies

  ○ Preventing and responding to stigmatisation and bullying.

Taking Care of Others

Given the unique pressures caused by the situation, school staff will likely have greater responsibilities this school year and will need to play an active role in taking care of others in addition to themselves. With students returning to school from various home environments and different capabilities to learn while not in school, their needs will be very diverse and school staff will need to be very empathetic. Students will need time and space to readjust to learning in schools.

01 Teacher Responsibilities

Teachers will need to differentiate their teaching pedagogy for different learners more than in years past given the likely increased learning gap and take a more active role in getting to know and support the students and their families. Here are some of the responsibilities that the teacher will have:

- Identify and report health concerns through escalation/monitoring procedure:

    - Look: Identify children and young people showing signs of distress

    - Listen: Communicate sensitively with a child or young person in distress

    - Link: Refer a child or young person to support services they may need

- Promote student participation in the sharing of key health and wellbeing messages including to prevent stigmatisation and emphasise students' responsibility and accountability

- Involve parent-teacher associations in delivering these messages to the community

- Ensure safety and physical distancing procedures are being followed inside the school by students

- Ensure that all students and staff members are properly wearing face masks that cover their nose and mouth

- Communicate all health and safety measures with parents and families before the school reopens

- Promote clear communication with parents and families and use questionnaires/surveys to understand their concerns

- Provide updated information about COVID-19 and school reopening procedures regularly and honestly and ensure this information is communicated through various media (such as pamphlets, posters and flyers) and is distributed in various languages

- Develop a learning strategy for students to be able to learn from home if they cannot come to school, including online and offline resources and blended learning, where appropriate.

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02 Psycho-Social Support for Students

School staff will need to provide holistic support to children in the transition back to the classroom, and at the same time manage their own transition and anxiety. This can result in a deeper relationship between the teachers and students than in the past that teachers should take advantage of. School staff should do following to support students:

- Provide updated information about COVID-19 and school reopening procedures in an honest, age-appropriate manner and include these in classroom lessons and activities

- Build and maintain a routine for children to follow

- Encourage children to discuss their questions and concerns publicly and privately and encourage students to see a guidance counsellor

- Listen to, validate and address children's emotions and concerns by demonstrating understanding and sympathy and explain it is normal that children may experience different reactions or emotions

- Be honest about children's health concerns about returning to school

- Guide students on how to support their peers and prevent stigma, exclusion and bullying

- Share that anyone can get the virus without making stereotypes or generalisations; remember that the virus doesn't follow geographical boundaries, ethnicities, age, ability or gender

- Work with school health workers/social workers to identify and support students who exhibit signs of distress

- Be complimentary and supportive of children and model good coping behaviours
Help students understand that adults are also anxious, but use different coping techniques to deal with them such as breathing techniques and stretching

- Discuss possibilities in a child-friendly way so that they are prepared for them including schools closing, friends or family members getting sick, etc.

- Promote honesty about health issues and develop a procedure to separate students with symptoms from others without creating stigma

- Discourage attendance awards or incentives

- Assign teachers to check-in on groups of students on a daily or weekly basis

- Use blended learning methods to encourage students to learn from home and engage with their classmates safely when they cannot attend classes

- Ensure content is age, gender, ethnicity and disability-responsive and activities are built into existing lessons

- Remind sick children that they are staying home not as a punishment, but as prevention to ensure that their friends don't get sick.

Taking Care of the Community

School communities play an important role in protecting children especially girls in poor, vulnerable and marginalised areas. School management should be aware that during the school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many children were confined at home where they may have been exposed to alcohol, drug or substance abuse, rape, gender-based violence, neglect or segregation leading to loneliness or mental health issues, which will require additional support. Similarly, there could be students who come from low income households, who depend on schools for meals and sanitary towels. Hence, it is critical for the school staff to be involved in supporting the entire community during the transition to reopening schools as the challenges that children will bring with them may stem from greater issues.

01 School Administration Responsibilities

Teachers will need to differentiate their teaching pedagogy for different learners more than in years past given the likely increased learning gap and take a more active role in getting to know and support the students and their families. Here are some of the responsibilities that the teacher will have:

- Ensure that your school has an escalation procedure to report suspected COVID-19 cases to the head teacher or administration

- Establish procedures if students or staff become unwell and plan ahead with local health authorities, school health staff and update emergency contact lists

- Alert local health and education authorities about large increases in student and staff absenteeism due to COVID-19 infections

- Work with social service systems to ensure continuity of critical services that may take place in schools such as health screenings

- Ensure that teachers have adequate supplies of masks and PPE and know how to use/clean them properly

- Include teachers' and staff's input in developing school reopening and emergency plans

- Plan for possible academic calendar changes, particularly in relation to breaks and exams

- Prepare your school community for reopening (see Reopening Schools).

02 Safe and Inclusive Schools

Because of the challenges outlined above that children may be facing at home, school staff should make time to explore and learn about students' experiences, particularly home-learning experiences; this will be an important part of their transition back to school. This is important to understand for pastoral, teaching and learning reasons. Children will need time and space to readjust in a safe and inclusive school environment that caters to the needs of all students, regardless of their gender, socio-economic status, physical or mental abilities.

Creating a Safe School

- Share appropriate information on COVID-19 and good hygiene practices in different formats so that students and families (with and without disabilities) are aware, i.e. posters, songs, poems, etc.

- Update or develop school emergency and contingency plans (see Before School Reopen: Operational/ Logistical Planning)

- Cancel any community events or meetings that usually take place on school premises

- Help children understand their role in maintaining the safety and cleanliness of the school premises

- Children should understand the psycho-social supports available and be able to trust their teachers and other educational staff

- Create a safe space for children to collectively and individually address other safety concerns with a trusted adult, including child molestation, domestic violence, education denial, gender-based violence teenage pregnancy and sexual harassment.

Creating an Inclusive School for Students

- Encourage children to mingle freely without discrimination of the poor, marginalised, affected, vulnerable, disabled, and/or violated and those mistreated by their socio-economic and domestic life

- Adapt school attendance policies to accommodate children who may have to stay home to care for sick family members

- Integrate COVID-19 prevention and cleanliness regulations into daily class lessons through age, gender, ethnicity and disability-responsive activities using accessible media including posters, illustrations, audio/video messages, etc.

- Use child-friendly communication channels and encourage children to engage in peer-to-peer dialogue to openly share concerns about family problems and returning to school

- Adapt class learning to accommodate different learning strategies and needs of different students

- Provide relevant health and hygiene guidelines that are adapted for disabled students

- Provide health screenings, physical and language therapy and feeding/nutrition programmes in the school to cater to all students, especially those who are disadvantaged

- Provide psycho-social support to all students to help them deal with fears and anxieties

- Identify and implement mitigation strategies that might increase health risks for girls, including taking care of sick family members or exploitation outside of school

- Differentiate lesson plans for students returning to school with different levels of learning during the learning-at-home period

- Ensure that lessons are adapted for students who do not have or have limited access to technology or additional educational support at home

- Encourage sympathy and understanding for the different challenges that students went through during the learning-from-home period

- Address and prevent stigma such as bullying and name-calling related to getting sick or having symptoms

- Share learning timetables and schedules with students in advance when possible prior to returning to school.

Creating an Inclusive School Community

- Encourage children to discuss their questions and concerns publicly and privately and encourage Share known information on COVID-19 and prevention methods with parents and caregivers regularly, in various languages and using different media

- Involve parents in parent-teacher committees to keep them updated and include their feedback in plans to reopen schools

- Provide accountability and feedback mechanisms for the entire school community through parent-teacher committees, school student council and youth clubs school clubs to (re)establish focus on school safety

- Ensure that all communication and health requirements shared with families are accessible for persons with disabilities, limited literacy and for speakers of local languages

- Provide anonymous feedback boxes throughout the school premises for students and families to provide feedback to the school

- Develop a transparent process to open and act on the feedback in the boxes

- Provide information and resources for families to access psycho-social support for themselves

- Strengthen communication strategies between parents and teachers to establish more meaningful student learning goals and better develop support systems at home, especially for students with significant additional needs.

Welcome Week

Children will likely feel anxious about returning to school and changing the routines and habits they have built over the past several months. Many may have heard parents or other adults discussing about whether it is safe to send children to school or may be so used to staying home to keep others safe that they will be uncertain about leaving home to go to school and be around other people. In order to support these children in their transition back to school, school management and staff should create a 'Welcome Week' planned to introduce them to their new routines at school and to address their fears and worries.
This Welcome Week is intended to help children understand how they will be kept safe at school and what responsibilities they have in maintaining the school as a safe, inclusive environment where they can learn. Activities for Welcome Week should be chosen and adapted based on the age of the students and should include a variety of activities and goals to keep them engaged.

Setting Expectations for Welcome Week

Resuming school after COVID-19 will be challenging. Educators, parents and frontline workers need to join together to ensure a smooth transition back to school for children in order to give them appropriate support. In their first week of arrival, children need to be engaged with a variety of activities to prepare them for the return to school and the new health and sanitation habits that will be required. The school reopening process should offer unique multi-sectoral opportunities for school communities to strengthen the education system and institutional routine. Educators should organise for holistic and inclusive participatory activities to enable all children to acquire life skills in respect to COVID-19.

 Teachers should also make time to learn about students' individual experiences, particularly in home-learning and their interactions with their families. Teachers can use class discussions in morning or yarning circle, through writing, poetry, music, art, dance, drama, etc. to provide authentic therapeutic opportunities. Welcome week activities will be important to help children adjust to the new normal in schools and to learn about the physical health and psycho-social supports available to them.

Practical training on WHO preventive measures and field safety Facilitator's Manual

Back to School Orientation Activities

- ***Overview of COVID-19 Symptoms and Health Procedures (see Taking Care of Yourself)***

  Children share what they already know about COVID-19 symptoms and prevention. Teachers ask probing questions, reinforce positive behaviours and correct misunderstandings so all students are well-aware of the need for health and sanitation measures. Teachers should refer to the latest official government guidelines and recommendations for schools. Teachers also explain screening and mass testing procedures at school in terms that avoid stigma so that students feel secure that they will be cared for if they feel sick.

- ***Overview of School Cleaning and Sanitation Schedule***

  Teachers update students on the cleaning procedures that will be in place in the school as well as what role each child has in maintaining the cleanliness of the school by cleaning up after themselves and taking part in the scheduled sanitation of the facilities, where required.

- ***Correct Handwashing***

  Students learn or relearn when and how hand washing should be done effectively. Ensure they wash their hands with warm water and soap up to the wrist paying attention to each part of the hand and counting slowly to 20. Teachers will demonstrate proper handwashing techniques including counting and will show students where new handwashing and sanitation facilities have been set up and should encourage students to wash their hands properly several times throughout the day.

- ***Guided Tour of School Premises***

  Children are taken on a tour of the different school facilities in small, physically distanced groups. For each room or school-designated space, children are asked to observe and list the different materials that characterise it. Teachers point out changes to facilities and explain why each change has been made to the facility to help children re-orient themselves in the space. Teachers also help children reconnect to that space by referencing specific times each space will be used. Finally, teachers invite children to recall the aim of a particular school area and to share some fun event they were part of and that is connected to that space.

- ***Correct Use of Masks***

  Teachers demonstrate correct mask wearing by washing their hands properly, taking out a clean, dry mask and inspecting it for tears or holes. Identify the outside and the top of the mask by locating the darker coloured side (or seams) and the malleable metal fitting or raised border. Fit the top of the mask to your face and adjust the metal fitting to the bridge of the nose and cheekbones. Loop the ear bands around the ears and adjust the mask so that the nose, mouth and chin are completely covered. Show children how to identify if a mask is too big for them and when a mask is not in the proper condition to be worn.

- *Correct Removal of Masks*

  Teachers demonstrate correct mask removal by removing the loops of the mask from behind the ears **without** touching the face of the mask. Place the mask carefully into a sealable plastic bag (or other acceptable storage container) and close properly. Paper or medical masks need to be disposed of properly and cannot be reused. If the mask is made from cloth, it should be soaked in hot, soapy water for 10 minutes and then washed, rinsed, dried and reused another day. Wash hands properly.

Psycho-Social Support Activities

The following activities can be used during Welcome Week or any other time to help teachers check-in on the mental wellbeing of their students. Use the activities to encourage students to share their experiences and follow-up with students personally or refer them to professional services where required.

- *Stories From Home*

  Children share stories from their time at home with their families. Associate each story with an emotion or feeling and explain the range of emotions that each child went through.

- *Important Family Members*

  Children should share stories or experiences about how a key figure helped them adjust to disruptions in their lives and highlight the work that trusted adults have in each person's life. Children discuss how they got through these hardships and challenges and encourage each other. Children can then draw pictures of these family members helping them and share the pictures with each other. Teachers can show how each family is different, but that every child has someone they can go to for support.

- *Listening Circle*

  Provide a space in groups or individually for children from disadvantaged backgrounds to share their experiences and get the support they need from teachers and staff. Teachers should be prepared to support children who experienced domestic violence, abuse, neglect or stigma and should immediately contact the relevant professional services to support the child.

● *Likes and Dislikes*

Read each statement below aloud to a group of children. Ask them to share how they feel about each sentence and explore if they felt positively or negatively about each one. As children share why they felt a certain way, discuss how emotions can change and develop and how the same statement might bring up multiple, complicated emotions. Ask students to create their own sentences to continue the activity. Younger students can draw each statement or how it makes them feel and older students can write a personal essay or diary entry about their experiences described by the sentence.

We have been staying at home from school

We have not being seeing our friends face-to-face

We have been doing things with our families

Didn't Like

We are not to stand too close to others

Loved

We have not been visiting family

We have been washing our hands every 30 seconds

● *Journal*

Encourage students to regularly write down their thoughts and experiences in a personal journal. They can write about any topic that appeals to them, not just their worries or concerns and do not need to share what they have written with others. Students can also decorate their journal pages to allow for artistic expression. Teachers should have a list of journal prompts or topic ideas prepared in case students need motivation.

● *Breathing and Self-soothing Techniques*

Teach children how to calm themselves down or reduce their anxiety through specific breathing and self-soothing techniques. Tell children to close their eyes and imagine that they are floating on a cloud or on the water. Encourage them to pretend that their lungs are balloons and to breathe until they are completely full and then very slowly exhale as they let all of their fears and worries go. Children can also do "shape breathing" where they imagine a triangle, square or star and breathe in as they mentally trace one side of the shape, pause at the point and then breathe out along another side. This continues for several minutes as the shape is repeated several times. Because students cannot hug each other due to physical distancing, encourage them to give themselves hugs or stroke their arms or head to self-soothe. They can also give themselves shoulder, arm, or hand massages to relieve tension.

NABU Books and Activities

Various NABU books have been written to help support children during this difficult time. Two books in particular are very useful to helping students transition back to schools and address their complicated feelings during this time.

- ### *My Back to School Bubble* by Hilary Rogers

  This story is about a friendly boy who is excited about going back to school but also wants to make sure that he and his classmates are safe. Use this story to address any misunderstandings the children have about COVID-19 and help them adjust to new routines when back to school.

  - **Myths and Facts about COVID-19**

    Have children play a game of myths and facts about COVID-19 to review their understanding of its symptoms and prevention. Children should be in small, physically distanced groups and should each share 1 myth and 2 facts about COVID-19 with each other. Other group members should identify the myth and correct it. Some examples of myths would include "COVID-19 is spread by evil spirits to catch bad children" or "There is safety in numbers to avoid COVID-19, so always stay in a big group". Some examples of facts would include "Washing your hands several times a day is the best way to protect yourself" or "Everyone should stay at least 1 metre away from everyone else at all times".

  - **Questions and Answers**

    Have students stand in a distanced circle with each child maintaining their own bubble and the teacher in the centre. The teacher chooses a student and asks them a question about how to act safely at school. Teachers can ask questions like, 'how do we wash our hands?' or 'how do we wear and remove face masks?' The student then chooses another student and the teacher asks them the next question. Children can come up with their own questions instead of the teacher.

  - **Special Greetings**

    Have children develop special greetings that do not include physical contact such as hugs or handshakes. Greetings can use physical gestures or sounds and be as creative as the children want or as complicated as they can remember. Encourage each class or teacher to have a special greeting for their students. The greeting can be as simple as hugging yourself and asking your friend to give themselves a hug just as tightly, so it feels as if you are hugging them.

● *Maria and the Tin Can Telephone* **by Kate Wanjira Kamau**

This story is about a girl who is adventurous and misses her friends when her school is closed. Use this story to encourage children to share the difficulties they have been through in the months away from school and discuss how they can alleviate their worries. Provide psycho-social support and help children keep in contact with the people who matter most to them.

○ **Throwing Out Worries**

Have students write down some of their worries on a piece of coloured paper. If they feel comfortable, have them share these worries with the class or the teacher can share some example worries. Have everyone discuss what they can do collectively to help alleviate that worry. Then have the child rip up their worries into small pieces and throw them into a rubbish bin. Encourage children to regularly write what is bothering them and throwing them out once they have discussed or resolved these fears.

○ **Stress Ball**

Help children make a stress ball out of rolled up socks, extra cloth or balloons. Socks can also be filled with rice, dry beans or sand/dirt. Make sure that stress balls are double wrapped and tied tightly. Encourage students to squeeze stress balls or play catch by themselves using the stress ball when they are feeling anxious.

○ **Letter Writing**

Encourage children to write letters to friends or family members who they have not been able to see recently and share what they have been up to. Show them how to structure an informal letter with an address, greeting, body and closing comment. Letters can be about exchanging news, asking for information, sharing appreciation for someone/something, sharing condolences or expressing different emotions.
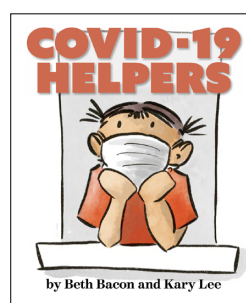
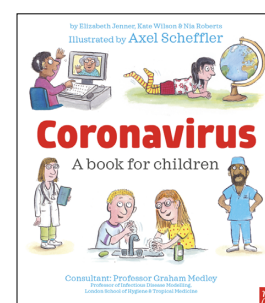● Additional books for school staff to consider using in lessons:
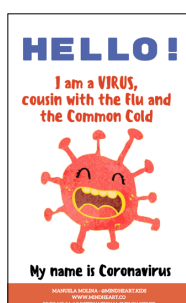
My Name is Coronavirus
by Manuela Molina
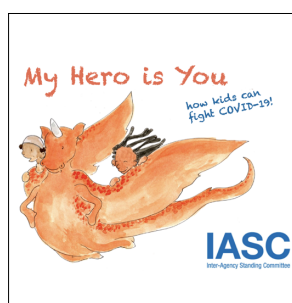
My Hero is You
by the OCHA Inter-Agency Standing Committee, also available in various local languages

COVID-19 Helpers
by Beth Bacon and Kary Lee

Coronavirus: A Book for Children
by Elizabeth Jenner, Kate Wilson and Nia Roberts

Other Activities

- ***Covid-19 Speeches***

  Have children prepare and present short speeches in their classes on COVID-19 symptoms, prevention and/or screening procedures to inform each other about the latest guidelines.

- ***COVID-19 Songs and Poems***

  Have students come up with group or individual songs or poems that have messages on the effects of COVID-19 and how to prevent it. For example, a song can focus on how to wash your hands properly or a poem can share how to play with friends whilst maintaining a physical distance.

- ***Covid-19 Posters***

  Have children create colourful posters of COVID-19 prevention measures such as proper handwashing or how to sanitise classrooms that can be put up throughout the school premises.

- ***Covid-19 Debates***

  Have students prepare debates on the best health procedures for the school to adopt to prevent COVID-19. Teachers can provide research materials or students can find information on their own. The school can consider adopting the best ideas from the debate.

- ***Covid-19 Skits***

  Have children prepare and act in short skits about COVID-19 in front of other students. Skits can include what to do when a child has COVID-19 symptoms or how to follow sanitation procedures at school. Skits should remove fear, anxiety or stigmatisation amongst students. An example skit could be as follows:

  See next page
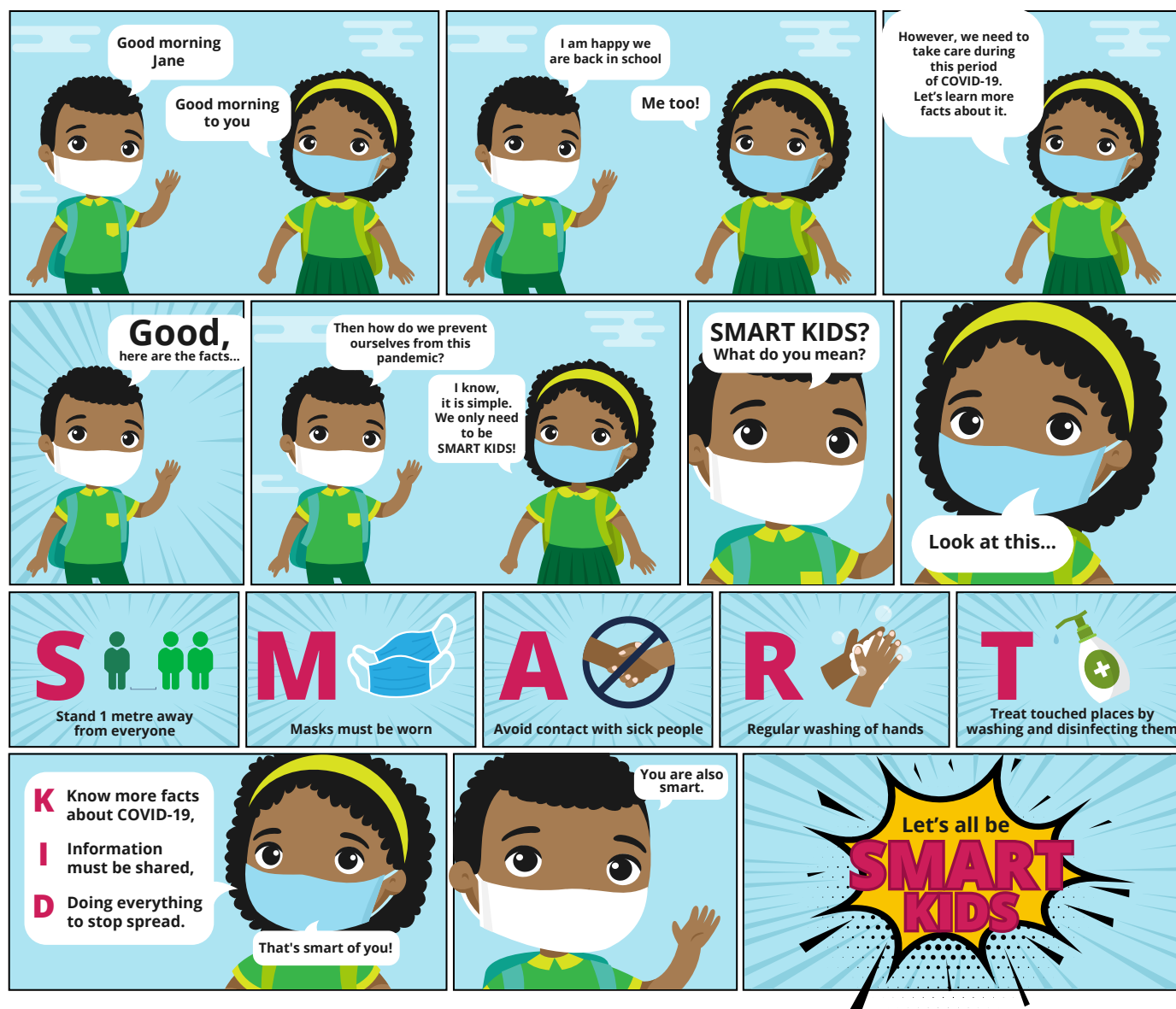
- *Alphabetise Names*

  Have students learn each other's names by getting them to sort themselves into a queue in alphabetical order by first name within a set time limit. Make sure they follow physical distancing guidelines and do not touch each other. To make it even more challenging, have them do the activity silently. They can also organise themselves along other characteristics, such as the area they live in, birth month or day, number of siblings, etc.

- *Physical Education*

  Encourage children to play activities outside that will maintain measures put in place for COVID-19, such as physical distancing. Children can engage in track and field competitions or yoga in a large outdoor space. Activities can include sprints, star jumps, stretching, dancing to music, etc.

Resources to Understand COVID-19

Various NABU books have been written to help support children during this difficult time. Two books in particular are very useful to helping students transition back to schools and address their complicated feelings during this time.

- What is COVID-19: *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MVvVTDhGqaA*

- How Germs Spread: *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YBGsoimPXZg*

- Stop Germs from Spreading: *https://youtu.be/JD85FDlxqCs*

Appendix

Karibu shuleni

Jinsi ya kujikinga kutokana na Coronavirus

BARAKOA YA USO
- Hakikisha umevalia barakoa kila wakati (isipokuwa unapofanya mazoezi).
- Hakikisha ya kwamba barakoa inafunika pua and mdomo yako.

1.5m

KUTOTANGAMANA NA WATU
- Hakikisha umesimama au umeketi kwa umbali wa mita moja na mwenzio.
- Zingatia umbali wa mita moja na watu walio na dalili za homa, kukohoa au joto jingi.
- Usikumbatiane wala usisalimiane kwa mikono.
- Usimgawie mwenzio vifaa vya kuandika wala vyakula.

USAFI WA MIKONO
- Osha mikono yako mara kwa mara na maji yanayotiririka pamoja na sabuni hata kama mikono yako si chafu.
- Osha mikono yako kabla hujagusa vyakula; Baada ya kutumia choo; Baada ya kugusa meza au ugusapo kitu chochote au vifaa vya kuandika vilivyoguswa na watu wengine.
- Usiguse macho yako wala pua wala mdomo kama hujatumia sanitaiza au hujanawa mikono.

KINGA YA KIFUA
- Funika pua and mdomo yako ukipiga chafya au ukikohoa.
- Kohoa ndani ya kiwiko chako au ndani ya kitambaa cha makamasi au tishu, kisha ukitupe kwenye pipa iliyo na kifuniko – malizia na kunawa mikono yako.

UKIJIHISI MGONJWA
- Ukijihisi mgonjwa (kwa mfano, ukihisi joto jingi, uchungu kwenye koo, kuhangaika kupumua au kuna kasoro na afya yako) – hakikisha umepata usaidizi kutoka kwa mwalimu, mzazi au wauguzi walio shuleni.
- Kaa nyumbani na upumzike.

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PLAN INTERNATIONAL

World University Service of Canada (WUSC)
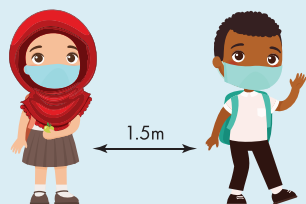
Canada

Welcome back to School

How to protect yourself from COVID-19

FACE MASK
- Wear a face mask at all times (except when playing sports or doing physical activities).
- Ensure the mask covers your nose and mouth.

1.5m

SOCIAL DISTANCING
- Ensure you stand /seat at least one metres apart
- keep at least a meter away from people who show cold symptoms (such as, runny nose, sneezing, coughs, fever/ high temperature)
- No hugging or shaking hands;
- No sharing stationery or food.

HAND HYGIENE
- Wash your hands frequently with running water and soap even if your hands don't seem dirty to you.
- Wash your hands before touching food; After using the toilet; After touching surfaces or whenever you touch an object or stationery that others have touched
- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if you haven't disinfected or washed your hands.

RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE
- Cover your nose and mouth when you sneeze or cough
- Cough inside your elbow, inside a handkerchief or tissue or a paper napkin and throw it immediately in a bin with a cover – then wash your hands.

FEELING UNWELL
- If you feel unwell (e.g. feeling feverish, sore throat, coughing, difficulty breathing or that something is not right with your state of health) – please tell this immediately to those who can help (teacher, parent, or school medical personnel)
- Stay at home and rest.

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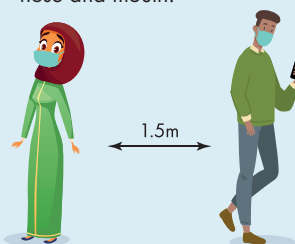
Canada

Welcome back to College

How to protect yourself from COVID-19

FACE MASK

- Wear a face mask at all times (except when playing sports or doing physical activities).
- Ensure the mask covers your nose and mouth.

1.5m

SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Ensure you stand /seat at least one metres apart
- keep at least a meter away from people who show cold symptoms (such as, runny nose, sneezing, coughs, fever/ high temperature)
- No hugging or shaking hands;
- No sharing stationery or food.

HAND HYGIENE

- Wash your hands frequently with running water and soap even if your hands don't seem dirty to you.
- Wash your hands before touching food; After using the toilet; After touching surfaces or whenever you touch an object or stationery that others have touched
- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if you haven't disinfected or washed your hands.

RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE

- Cover your nose and mouth when you sneeze or cough
- Cough inside your elbow, inside a handkerchief or tissue or a paper napkin and throw it immediately in a bin with a cover – then wash your hands.

FEELING UNWELL

- If you feel unwell (e.g. feeling feverish, sore throat, coughing, difficulty breathing or that something is not right with your state of health) – please tell this immediately to those who can help.
- Stay at home/ hostel and rest.

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PLAN INTERNATIONAL

World University Service of Canada (WUSC)

Canada

HOW TO WASH YOUR HANDS CORRECTLY

CRS

1 Wet hands with water.

2 Apply enough soap to cover surface of hands.

3 Rub hands palm to palm.

4 Rub right hand over left with interlaced fingers. Repeat with other hand.

5 Rub palm to palm with interlaced fingers.

6 Rub palms together with fingers interlocked.

7 Rotate thumb as it is clasped with the opposite hand. Repeat with other hand.

8 Rub tips of fingers in palm of hand. Repeat with other hand.

9 Rinse hands with water.

10 Your hands are now safe.

The whole process should take about one minute.

Attention!
If you use a pitcher for handwashing, wash the handle of the pitcher with soap and water before you wash your hands.

Protect yourself and loved ones from coronavirus.

Wash your hands regularly with **soap** and **water**.

Cover your mouth and nose while **sneezing** or **coughing**.

Avoid close contact with anyone who has a cold or flu-like symptoms.

If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, **seek medical care early**.

HELP STOP CORONAVIRUS

HANDS WASH THEM OFTEN

ELBOW COUGH INTO IT

FACE DON'T TOUCH IT

FEET STAY MORE THAN 3 FT. APART

SICK FEEL SICK? STAY HOME!

SOURCE: WHO

abc NEWS

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)

SOCIAL DISTANCING

Social distancing means consciously increasing the physical space between yourself and others. These are measures you can take to limit the spread of COVID-19.

SOCIAL DISTANCING TIPS

1-2m or 3-6ft

Keep at least 1 to 2 metres (3 to 6 feet) distance from others even if they appear well.

1-2m or 3-6ft

Stay away from a sick person.

Call or use online services for getting essential items. Go out only when necessary, maintain distance.

Stay at home when sick, even if symptoms are mild.

Phone your doctor for routine consultation. Visit hospitals when medical attention is necessary.

Use private vehicles as much as possible. Avoid public transport.

Work from home, where possible.

Call and use social media to interact with friends and family. Stay away from large and small gatherings.

1-2m or 3-6ft

Wave, bow, nod or use any other culturally appropriate gesture to greet others. Don't shake hands, kiss or hug.

Avoid non-essential travel.

This infographic has been developed for educational purposes only and is correct at the time of publication. It is not a substitute for professional medical advice. Should you have any questions or concerns about any topic in the infographic, please consult your medical professional.

INTERNATIONAL SOS

STOP COVID-19

ILLUSTRATIONS BY EL MARTO FOR CRS.

CRS

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Canadä

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