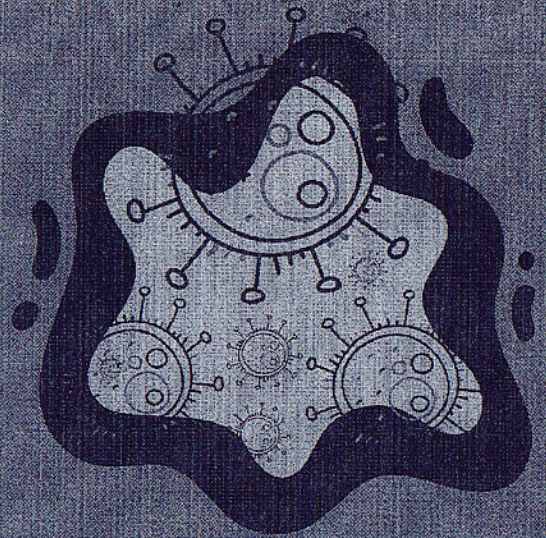




CORONAVIRUS COVID-19



What are Coronaviruses?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause respiratory illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). Coronaviruses are zoonotic, meaning they are transmitted between animals and people.

What is COVID-19?

SARS-CoV-2 is a new strain of coronavirus that has not been previously identified in humans. COVID-19 was identified as the cause of an outbreak of respiratory illness first detected in Wuhan, China.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms can include fever, cough and shortness of breath. Symptoms may appear in as few as two days or as long as 14 days after exposure.

How it is spread?

Human coronaviruses most commonly spread from an infected person to others through:

- The air by coughing and sneezing.
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands.
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands.
- Keep your distance. Maintain at least 1 metre distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.

What are the prevention measures?

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19 disease. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus.

There are certain steps you can take to reduce your exposure to SARS-CoV-2:

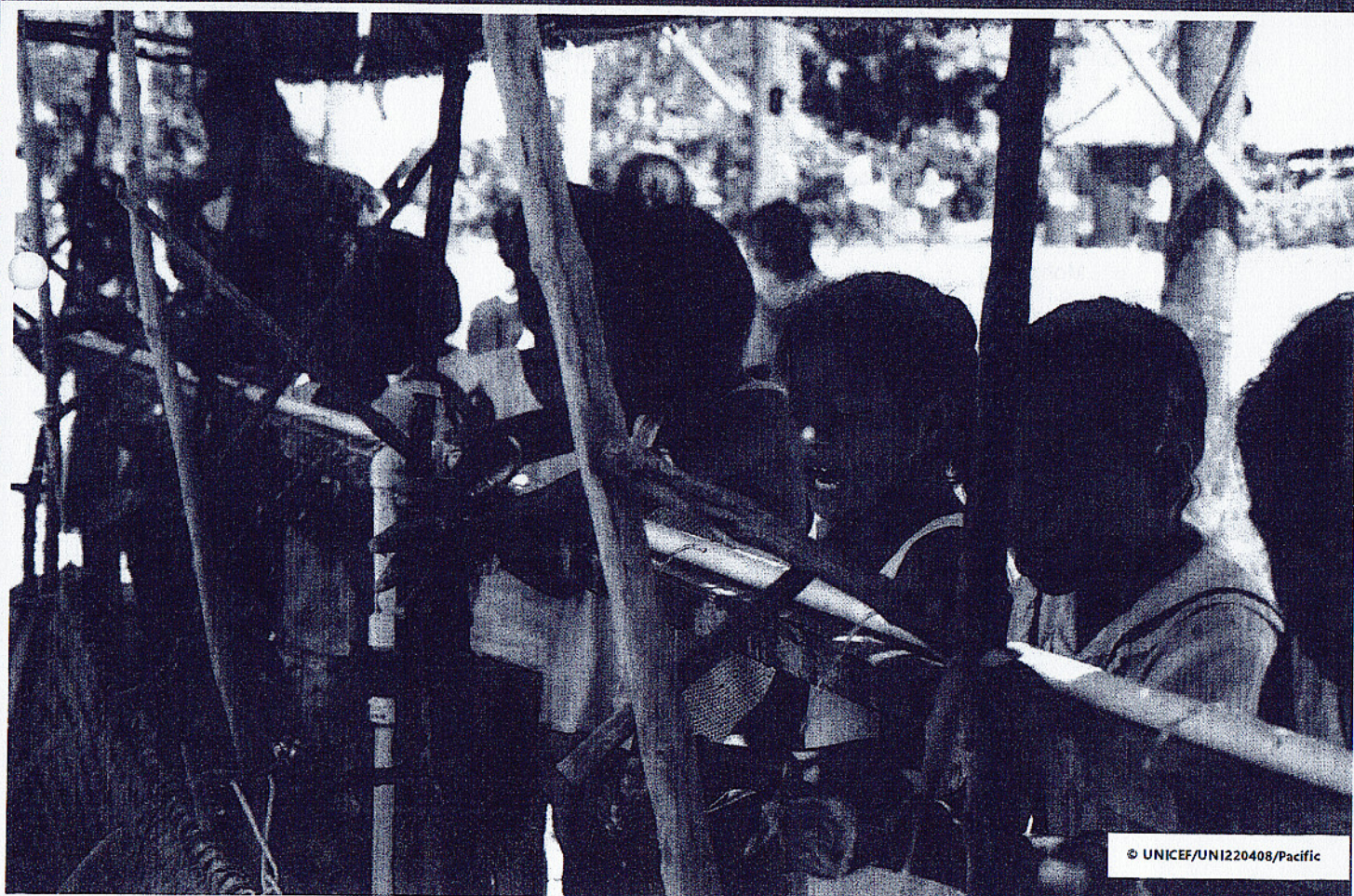
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser.
- Cover your mouth and nose with your flexed elbow or a tissue. Throw away the tissue in a bin immediately and wash hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that are frequently touched.
- Avoid close contact with anyone who has a fever and cough.
- Seek medical care especially if you have flu-like symptoms and experiencing cough and difficulty breathing.
- Avoid consumption of raw or undercooked animal products.
- Avoid travel if you have a fever and cough.

Key Messages and Actions for COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools

March 2020



+CIFRC



© UNICEF/UNI220408/Pacific

CONTENTS

- I. FACTS ABOUT COVID-19
 - COVID-19
 - Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs)
- II. INTRODUCTION
- III. SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS AND STAFF
 - Key Messages & Actions
 - Checklist
- IV. PARENTS/CAREGIVERS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS
 - Key Messages & Actions
 - Checklist
- V. STUDENTS AND CHILDREN
 - Checklist
 - Age-specific health education
 - Preschool
 - Primary School
 - Lower Secondary School
 - Upper Secondary School

ANNEXES (TO FOLLOW SHORTLY IN AN UPDATED DOCUMENT, INDICATIVE CONTENT BELOW)

- A. Supply Recommendations
- B. Important considerations
 - Contextualizing guidance at country level (vulnerable populations)
 - Operationalizing guidance (dissemination and implementation)
 - Monitoring
- C. Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)
 - MHPSS Key Messages
- D. Resources & Additional Information
 - Sample Posters

I. FACTS ABOUT COVID-19

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a disease caused by a new strain of coronavirus. 'CO' stands for corona, 'VI' for virus, and 'D' for disease. Formerly, this disease was referred to as '2019 novel coronavirus' or '2019-nCoV.' The COVID-19 virus is a new virus linked to the same family of viruses as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and some types of common cold.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Symptoms can include fever, cough and shortness of breath. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia or breathing difficulties. More rarely, the disease can be fatal. These symptoms are similar to the flu (influenza) or the common cold, which are a lot more common than COVID-19. This is why testing is required to confirm if someone has COVID-19.

How does COVID-19 spread?

The virus is transmitted through direct contact with respiratory droplets of an infected person (generated through coughing and sneezing). Individuals can also be infected from and touching surfaces contaminated with the virus and touching their face (e.g., eyes, nose, mouth). The COVID-19 virus may survive on surfaces for several hours, but simple disinfectants can kill it.

Who is most at risk?

We are learning more about how COVID-19 affects people every day. Older people, and people with chronic medical conditions, such as diabetes and heart disease, appear to be more at risk of developing severe symptoms. As this is a new virus, we are still learning about how it affects children. We know it is possible for people of any age to be infected with the virus, but so far there are relatively few cases of COVID-19 reported among children. This is a new virus and we need to learn more about how it affects children. The virus can be fatal in rare cases, so far mainly among older people with pre-existing medical conditions.

What is the treatment for COVID-19?

There is no currently available vaccine for COVID-19. However, many of the symptoms can be treated and getting early care from a healthcare provider can make the disease less dangerous. There are several clinical trials that are being conducted to evaluate potential therapeutics for COVID-19.

How can the spread of COVID-19 be slowed down or prevented?

As with other respiratory infections like the flu or the common cold, public health measures are critical to slow the spread of illnesses. Public health measures are everyday preventive actions that include:

- ✓ staying home when sick;
- ✓ covering mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue when coughing or sneezing. Dispose of used tissue immediately;
- ✓ washing hands often with soap and water; and
- ✓ cleaning frequently touched surfaces and objects.

As we learn more about COVID-19 public health officials may recommend additional actions.

II. INTRODUCTION

The outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has been declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) and the virus has now spread to many countries and territories. While a lot is still unknown about the virus that causes COVID-19, we do know that it is transmitted through direct contact with respiratory droplets of an infected person (generated through coughing and sneezing). Individuals can also be infected from touching surfaces contaminated with the virus and touching their face (e.g., eyes, nose, mouth). While COVID-19 continues to spread it is important that communities take action to prevent further transmission, reduce the impacts of the outbreak and support control measures.

The protection of children and educational facilities is particularly important. Precautions are necessary to prevent the potential spread of COVID-19 in school settings; however, care must also be taken to avoid stigmatizing students and staff who may have been exposed to the virus. It is important to remember that COVID-19 does not differentiate between borders, ethnicities, disability status, age or gender. Education settings should continue to be welcoming, respectful, inclusive, and supportive environments to all. Measures taken by schools can prevent the entry and spread of COVID-19 by students and staff who may have been exposed to the virus, while minimizing disruption and protecting students and staff from discrimination.

Purpose

Today, children and young people are global citizens, powerful agents of change and the next generation of caregivers, scientists, and doctors. Any crisis presents the opportunity to help them learn, cultivate compassion and increase resilience while building a safer and more caring community. Having information and facts about COVID-19 will help diminish students' fears and anxieties around the disease and support their ability to cope with any secondary impacts in their lives. This guidance provides key messages and considerations for engaging school administrators, teachers and staff, parents, caregivers and community members, as well as children themselves in promoting safe and healthy schools.

The purpose of this document is to provide clear and actionable guidance for safe operations through the prevention, early detection and control of COVID-19 in schools and other educational facilities. The guidance, while specific to countries that have already confirmed the transmission of COVID-19, is still relevant in all other contexts. Education can encourage students to become advocates for disease prevention and control at home, in school, and in their community by talking to others about how to prevent the spread of viruses. Maintaining safe school operations or reopening schools after a closure requires many considerations but, if done well, can promote public health.

III. SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS AND STAFF

Key Messages & Actions

Basic principles

Following basic principles can help keep students, teachers, and staff safe at school and help stop the spread of this disease. Recommendations for healthy schools are:

- Sick students, teachers and other staff should not come to school
- Schools should enforce regular hand washing with safe water and soap, alcohol rub/hand sanitizer or chlorine solution and, at a minimum, daily disinfection and cleaning of school surfaces
- Schools should provide water, sanitation and waste management facilities and follow environmental cleaning and decontamination procedures
- Schools should promote social distancing (a term applied to certain actions that are taken to slow down the spread of a highly contagious disease, including limiting large groups of people coming together)

Know the latest facts

Understand basic information about coronavirus disease (COVID-19), including its symptoms, complications, how it is transmitted and how to prevent transmission. Stay informed about COVID-19 through reputable sources such as UNICEF, WHO and national health ministry advisories. Be aware of fake information/myths that may circulate by word-of-mouth or online.

Ensure safe school operations

See 'Checklist on Safe School Environments' below

Update or develop school emergency and contingency plans. Work with officials to guarantee schools are not used as shelters, treatment units, etc. Consider cancelling any community events/meetings that usually take place on school premises, based on risk.

Reinforce frequent handwashing and sanitation and procure needed supplies. Prepare and maintain handwashing stations with soap and water, and if possible, place alcohol-based hand rub (hand sanitizers) in each classroom, at entrances and exits, and near lunchrooms and toilets.

Clean and disinfect school buildings, classrooms and especially water and sanitation facilities at least once a day, particularly surfaces that are touched by many people (railings, lunch tables, sports equipment, door and window handles, toys, teaching and learning aids etc.)

Implement social distancing practices that may include:

- Staggering the beginning and end of the school day
- Cancelling assemblies, sports games and other events that create crowded conditions
- When possible, create space for children's desks to be at least one metre apart
- Teach and model creating space and avoiding unnecessary touching

Establish procedures if students or staff become unwell

Plan ahead with local health authorities, school health staff and update emergency contact lists. Ensure a procedure for separating sick students and staff from those who are well – without creating stigma – and a process for informing parents/caregivers, and consulting with health care providers/health authorities wherever possible. Students/staff may need to be referred directly to a health facility, depending on the situation/context, or sent home. Share procedures with staff, parents and students ahead of time.

Promote information sharing

Coordinate and follow guidelines from the national health and education authorities. Share known information with staff, caregivers and students, providing updated information on the disease situation, including prevention and control efforts at school. Reinforce that caregivers should alert the school and health care authorities if someone in their home has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and keep their child at home. Utilize parent-teacher committees and other mechanisms to promote information sharing. Also be sure to address children's questions and concerns, including through the development of child-friendly materials such as posters which can be placed on notice boards, in restrooms, and other central locations.

Adapt school policies where appropriate

Develop flexible attendance and sick leave policies that encourage students and staff to stay home when sick or when caring for sick family members. Discourage the use of perfect attendance awards and incentives. Identify critical job functions and positions, and plan for alternative coverage by cross-training staff. Plan for possible academic calendar changes, particularly in relation to breaks and exams.

Monitor school attendance

Implement school absenteeism monitoring systems to track student and staff absence and compare against usual absenteeism patterns at the school. Alert local health authorities about large increases in student and staff absenteeism due to respiratory illnesses.

Plan for continuity of learning

In the case of absenteeism/sick leave or temporary school closures, support continued access to quality education. This can include:

- Use of online/e-learning strategies
- Assigning reading and exercises for home study
- Radio, podcast or television broadcasts of academic content
- Assigning teachers to conduct remote daily or weekly follow up with students
- Review/develop accelerated education strategies

Implement targeted health education

Integrate disease prevention and control in daily activities and lessons. Ensure content is age-, gender-, ethnicity-, and disability-responsive and activities are built into existing subjects. (See Section on Age-Appropriate Health Education)

Address Mental Health/Psychosocial support needs

Encourage children to discuss their questions and concerns. Explain it is normal that they may experience different reactions and encourage them to talk to teachers if they have any questions or concerns. Provide information in an honest, age-appropriate manner. Guide students on how to support their peers and prevent exclusion and bullying. Ensure teachers are aware of local resources for their own well-being. Work with school health workers/social workers to identify and support students and staff who exhibit signs of distress.

Support vulnerable populations

Work with social service systems to ensure continuity of critical services that may take place in schools such as health screenings, feeding programs or therapies for children with special needs. Consider the specific needs of children with disabilities, and how marginalized populations may be more acutely impacted by the illness or its secondary effects. Examine any specific implications for girls that may increase their risk, such as responsibility for taking care of the sick at home, or exploitation when out of school.

CHECKLIST FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS AND STAFF

- ☐ 1. Promote and demonstrate regular hand washing and positive hygiene behaviors and monitor their uptake. Ensure adequate, clean and separate toilets for girls and boys
 - Ensure soap and safe water is available at age-appropriate hand washing stations
 - Encourage frequent and thorough washing (at least 20 seconds)
 - Place hand sanitizers in toilets, classrooms, halls, and near exits where possible
 - Ensure adequate, clean and separate toilets or latrines for girls and boys
- ☐ 2. Clean and disinfect school buildings, classrooms and especially water and sanitation facilities at least once a day, particularly surfaces that are touched by many people (railings, lunch tables, sports equipment, door and window handles, toys, teaching and learning aids etc.)
 - Use sodium hypochlorite at 0.5% (equivalent 5000ppm) for disinfecting surfaces and 70% ethyl alcohol for disinfection of small items, and ensure appropriate equipment for cleaning staff
- ☐ 3. Increase air flow and ventilation where climate allows (open windows, use air conditioning where available, etc.)
- ☐ 4. Post signs encouraging good hand and respiratory hygiene practices
- ☐ 5. Ensure trash is removed daily and disposed of safely

IV. PARENTS/CAREGIVERS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Key Messages and Actions

COVID-19 is a new virus and we are still learning about how it affects children. We know it is possible for people of any age to be infected with the virus, but so far there have been relatively few cases of COVID-19 reported among children. The virus can be fatal in cases, so far mainly among older people with pre-existing medical conditions.

Know the latest facts

Understand basic information about coronavirus disease (COVID-19), including its symptoms, complications, how it is transmitted and how to prevent transmission. Stay informed about COVID-19 through reputable sources such as UNICEF and WHO and national health ministry advisories. Be aware of fake information/myths that may circulate by word-of-mouth or online.

Recognize the symptoms of COVID-19 (coughing, fever, shortness of breath) in your child

Seek medical advice by first calling your health facility/provider and then take your child in, if advised. Remember that symptoms of COVID-19 such as cough or fever can be similar to those of the flu, or the common cold, which are a lot more common. If your child is sick, keep them home from school and notify the school of your child's absence and symptoms. Request reading and assignments so that students can continue learning while at home. Explain to your child what is happening in simple words and reassure them that they are safe.

Keep children in school when healthy

If your child isn't displaying any symptoms such as a fever or cough it's best to keep them in school – unless a public health advisory or other relevant warning or official advice has been issued affecting your child's school.

— Instead of keeping children out of school, teach them good hand and respiratory hygiene practices for school and elsewhere, like frequent handwashing (see below), covering a cough or sneeze with a flexed elbow or tissue, then throwing away the tissue into a closed bin, and not touching their eyes, mouths or noses if they haven't properly washed their hands.

Washing hands properly

Step 1: Wet hands with safe running water

Step 2: Apply enough soap to cover wet hands

Step 3: Scrub all surfaces of the hands – including backs of hands, between fingers and under nails – for at least 20 seconds

Step 4: Rinse thoroughly with running water

Step 5: Dry hands with a clean, dry cloth, single-use towel or hand drier as available

Wash your hands often, especially before and after eating; after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom/ toilets/latrines and whenever your hands are visibly dirty. If soap