



## E - WCED Guideline: Cleaning of schools and maintaining hygiene

Branch: Institution Development and Coordination	E - WCED Guideline: Cleaning of schools and maintaining hygiene	
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Approved by the Head of Department:



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## **E - WCED GUIDELINE: CLEANING OF SCHOOLS AND MAINTAINING HYGIENE**

### **Purpose:**

School buildings have been standing vacant for almost six weeks. Because of the short life span of the coronavirus, school buildings are safe and hence, do not need to be deep cleaned. Instead, schools need to be cleaned thoroughly with disinfectants. The following guidelines can be followed when cleaning school buildings and maintaining hygiene.

### **1. Principles of infection prevention and control:**

A safe environment can be achieved through elimination of infectious particles in the air and on surfaces by always adhering to the 5 Golden Rules.

The following are the 5 Golden Rules to prevent the spread of the coronavirus:

1. Separate yourself physically from other people:
  - By staying away from people as much as possible
  - By staying home if unwell.
2. Physical distancing when around other people:
  - Keep a distance of at least 1.5 metres (2 arm lengths) from others.
  - Do NOT shake hands, or hug, or fist bump, or elbow bump. Keep your distance.
3. Hand washing/sanitising:
  - Regular hand-washing with soap and water for 20 seconds.
  - Or rub hands with alcohol-based hand sanitiser
  - Wash hands after touching people, surfaces and objects.
4. Practising good hygiene measures:
  - Cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue and then put the tissue in a bin and wash your hands immediately.
  - Do not touch your face with unwashed hands.
5. Using cloth face masks:
  - Use a cloth face mask to cover your nose and mouth.
  - Don't touch the mask after you put it on.
  - Leave the mask on all the time except when you need to eat/drink. For eating/drinking, take it off carefully by the strings and place it in a clean paper or plastic bag.
  - 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.

## **2. Daily duties of cleaners:**

Daily duties of cleaners include:

- Clean all surfaces (e.g. floors, bathrooms, desks) thoroughly daily with disinfectant cleaner (recommend sodium hypochlorite 0.5% (biocide sachets) or bleach mixture of 250ml of bleach to 5 litres of water).
- Surfaces that are frequently touched such as taps, doorknobs at classrooms and toilets, gate handles, locks and toilet handles. Other frequently touched areas are in staff rooms. Items such as microwaves, kettles, fridges and photocopy machines must be cleaned frequently with 20 ml bleach per litre of water.
- Collect all the bags with possible contaminated waste in bins in classrooms and offices. Tie the bags and dispose of properly in big refuse bags. Tie the refuse bags again.
- Wear protective gear at all times as discussed below.

## **3. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for cleaning:**

All cleaners must adhere to the 5 golden rules as discussed above. Cleaners must also ensure that:

- Face masks must be worn all the time.
- They must protect their hands by washing or disinfecting frequently, or by wearing gloves (which must also be thoroughly cleaned or disposed of.)
- They must wear closed shoes

In addition, it is recommended that cleaners should have access to:

- Heavy duty gloves
- Face masks
- Closed shoes

Correct use, necessary hygiene practices and proper disposal of PPE is important to avoid cross contamination from PPE to the user's hands or clothes. Cleaners should perform hand hygiene using the proper techniques before putting on protective gear for cleaning and after removing it, when changing gloves or after any contact with waste material.

The procedure to follow:

- Wash the gloves with disinfectant and dry with a paper towel. Place the paper towel in a bin.
- Remove the gloves and put it on a disinfected surface.
- Wash your hands with soap and water.
- Face masks should be washed and ironed every day.

#### **4. Cleaning offices and classrooms:**

- Surface tops (tables and cupboards) especially those areas frequently touched, must be cleaned with diluted bleach disinfectant (20 ml bleach per litre of water).
- All learner desks must be cleaned with diluted bleach disinfectant (20 ml bleach per litre of water).
- A cloth can be used to clean these surfaces with the disinfectant.
- Cleaning staff must use protective gloves when doing so.
- The classroom door handle(s) must be cleaned before the teacher or subject class learners or register class learners enter the room.
- Floor surfaces can be mopped with diluted bleach disinfectant after it has been swept.

#### **5. Maintain a clean and safe environment if the office/classroom:**

- Surfaces that are frequently touched, e.g. the doorknobs, must be cleaned frequently with a 20 ml bleach per litre of water, or disinfectant wipes/liquid.
- Utensils like pens, erasers, books, rulers, pencils, etc. must not be shared amongst learners and/ or teachers or placed in mouth.
- Classrooms must be well ventilated. Coughing (in the bent elbow) and sneezing etiquette (in a tissue) must be adhered to at all times.
- Social distancing must be observed.
- Classrooms must be cleaned at least twice a day with a disinfectant.
- Desks/chairs must be cleaned by occupants/cleaners at the end of the day, after the classroom has been vacated or is occupied the next morning.

The items listed below should be made available in each classroom/office/hostel room/kitchen/school hall/forum, as far as possible:

- A hand sanitiser with at least a 60 % alcohol base.
- A litter bin with lid, lined with a bin liner (or black refuse bag) in which all tissues, paper towels and possible contaminated waste must be discarded.
- Paper towels, tissues or toilet paper to dry hands or wipe surfaces. Used paper towels must be discarded safely in the litter bin which must have a lid.

#### **6. Cleaning of toilets:**

- Toilet door handles, etc. should be cleaned with diluted bleach disinfectant (20 ml bleach per litre of water) hourly, or at least before and after intervals and after the learners have been dismissed for the day.
- Access to toilets must be regularised by the school to ensure that not too many learners are simultaneously in the toilets. Think of staggered intervals.

### **Maintain clean and safe toilets/bathrooms:**

- A portable handwashing station, handwashing soap (liquid) or hand sanitiser should be in all toilet facilities for handwashing after using the toilet facilities.
- Disinfectant cleaner (Recommend sodium hypochlorite 0.5% (biocide sachets) **or** bleach mixture of 250ml of bleach to 5 litres of water) must be utilised for daily cleaning of all surfaces.
- Surfaces that are regularly touched, e.g. taps, doorknobs and toilet handles must be wiped down hourly or when appropriate with 20 ml bleach per litre of water or disinfectant wipes/liquid.

### **7. Risk reduction methods for schools:**

After the school has been cleaned, it is important to ensure that the safety of the environment is maintained. This is the responsibility of all users of the school (teachers, non-teaching staff and learners). Below follow some risk reduction methods to be observed by all:

- Each person (parent, teacher, learner or visitor) who enters or leaves a school, must wash their hands or sanitise their hands at the entrance/gate using hand hygiene stations which are equipped with liquid soap or soap and running water or water that can be sprayed onto the hands (or sanitise with a hand sanitiser with a 60/70% alcohol base).
- For now, parents and visitors ought not to be allowed into the school premises as far as possible.
- Take the temperature of each person (parent, teacher, learner or visitor) who enters a school with a digital thermometer scanner as follows:
  - A reading of 38° C and above indicates possible fever.
  - Visitors and staff with a fever are not allowed on the school grounds.
  - Learners with a fever must be kept separately from other people until they can return home. Parents/caregivers should be contacted without undue delay. It is strongly advised that in these situations, parents are requested to come and fetch their children and to request them to take the child/ward to the doctor or clinic.
- The installation, supervision, and regular refilling of the stock/equipment is the responsibility of the principal or his/her delegate.

### **Principals must ensure:**

- To receive the initial hygiene pack ordered by the WCED for all schools. Sign receipt and retain copy to be later sent to the department.
- Stock must be filled up to prevent a situation where no essential sanitation and hygiene material is available.
- Ensure refresher hand hygiene training and reminders to learners.
- Communication to parents about the importance of hand hygiene and social distancing in preventing the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

## 8. Hand Hygiene procedure

- Frequent hand hygiene must be part of the routine of everyday life in schools.
- Every person that enters a classroom must wash their hands with soap (liquid) and water (that is clean and was not used before, i.e. no grey water) or sanitise (with at least a 60 % alcohol base) their hands and again when leaving the classroom.

Advocacy material on handwashing must be available. Information messages should also include:

- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.
- Wear a mask at all times, especially when you communicate with others.
- Follow good respiratory hygiene: cover your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when coughing or sneezing, then dispose of the used tissue in a bin with a lid.
- Maintain at least a distance of 1.5 m between yourself and others, i.e. there must be no physical contact between you and any other person during school hours and/or before and/or after school and/or on your way from home to school or school to home or any other destination for that matter.
- Do not talk into the face of others if you do not wear a mask that covers your mouth.

