Re-opening of Schools in Pakistan in Light of Covid-19 Pandemic
Objectives

• Provide guidance for school managers and teachers for preparedness and reopening of schools in Pakistan

• Provide mitigation strategies to minimize spread of Covid-19

• Provide reactive measures in case of new cases

• Suggest ways to maintain a healthy environment

• Ensure the safety of school staff and children
Multi-layered approach to prevent introduction & spread of SARS-CoV-2 in schools

1. Community
   • Early detection and isolation of cases; contact tracing and quarantine
   • Swift public health response to halt spread: Cluster investigation and local public health measures
   • Physical distancing, hand-washing and wearing of masks
   • Community-led initiatives for risk reduction (e.g. addressing incorrect information, rumors, stigma); Safe public transportation, protection of vulnerable groups and other measures as appropriate
Multi-layered approach to prevent introduction & spread of SARS-CoV-2 in schools

2. School & classrooms

- Personal, Administrative and Engineering controls
- Goal is to maintain a clean and healthy environment
Multi-layered approach to prevent introduction & spread of SARS-CoV-2 in schools

3. Individuals at high risk

- Identification of students and teachers at high-risk of severe illness – those individuals with pre-existing medical conditions

- Develop appropriate strategies to keep these individuals safe
Designated COVID-19 Point of Contact

- Designate a staff person to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns

- All school staff and families should know about this focal person and how to contact them

- The designated focal person must ensure adherence to social distancing, infection prevention measures, triggering mechanisms in case of any positive case(s) or suspected case(s) in school.
Case Investigation & Contact Tracing

- Notify health officials, staff and families immediately
- School areas used by the ill person(s) should be cleaned and disinfected
- Ensure close contacts are notified
- Advised to stay home for 14 days
- Work with local health officials to assess spread in school
Case Investigation & Contact Tracing

If a student or staff tests positive for COVID-19:

• Consider closure of groups, classrooms or schools

• Persons infected may return to school after meeting criteria for ending home isolation
QUARANTINE keeps someone who was in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 away from others.

If you had close contact with a person who has COVID-19

- Stay home until 14 days after your last contact.
- Check your temperature twice a day and watch for symptoms of COVID-19.
- If possible, stay away from people who are at higher-risk for getting very sick from COVID-19.

ISOLATION keeps someone who is sick or tested positive for COVID-19 without symptoms away from others, even in their own home.

If you are sick and think or know you have COVID-19

- Stay home until after
  - 3 days with no fever and
  - Symptoms improved and
  - 10 days since symptoms first appeared

If you tested positive for COVID-19 but do not have symptoms

- Stay home until after
  - 10 days have passed since your positive test.

If you live with others, stay in a specific “sick room” or area and away from other people or animals, including pets. Use a separate bathroom, if available.
Communication with parents, students, teachers & staff

- Collaboration between school and community is vital
- Ensure frequent communication to reassure parents, students and teachers
- Post signs in visible locations that promote everyday protective measures
Communication with parents, students, teachers & staff

- Address rumors, misleading information and stigma

- Ask for cooperation of parents to report any cases of COVID-19 in the household

- If someone in the household is suspected of having COVID-19, all members of household should stay home and school should be informed
School-level Measures

- **Personal Controls**
  - Individuals’ behaviors to protect themselves and those around them

- **Engineering Controls**
  - Processes and policies that keep people safe

- **Administrative Controls**
  - Physical structures put in place to distance people from hazards
Personal Controls

1. Physical distancing
   • Maintain a 1-meter distance at all times for both students and staff inside and outside classrooms

2. Hand Hygiene (HH)
   • Frequent HH should be performed by students and staff i.e. hand washing with soap and water, and hand rubbing with alcohol based hand rub (ABHR) containing at least 70 % alcohol
Personal Controls

• Hand hygiene should be performed by students and staff: upon entry and exit; after breaks; after blowing their nose, sneezing, or coughing; before and after eating

• Hand washing should be performed: when hands are visibly soiled and after using toilet
3. **Face Masks**
   - All students and staff should wear a medical or surgical face mask
   - Mask should be three layered including a water-resistant outer layer, a middle melt-blown layer, and water-absorbent inner layer

4. **Cough Etiquette**
   - Cover coughs and sneezes

5. **Staying Home**
   - Stay home when sick, or after close contact with someone who is sick.
6. Environmental Cleaning

- Intensify cleaning and disinfection by cleaning staff

- **Cleaning** refers to the physical removal of germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces. It does not kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their number and risk of spreading infection.

- **Disinfecting** refers to using chemicals e.g. sodium hypochlorite (bleach), to kill germs on surfaces.

- Frequently touched surfaces e.g. railings, desks, tables, toilet surfaces, teaching aids, door and window handles, should be cleaned and disinfected at least twice a day and more frequently when possible.
Cleaning activities should limit turbulence to prevent dispersal of dust.

✓ Use of damp cloth or wet mop

✓ No brooms
Cleaning and disinfection procedure:

- Put on personal protective equipment (rubber gloves, thick aprons, and closed shoes)
- Mix 0.1% bleach solution in well-ventilated area
6. Environmental Cleaning

• Use a 0.1% solution made from bleach and water for disinfection. To mix, use the percentage found on the bleach bottle (for example, 5%) and follow these instructions:

\[
\frac{\text{% chlorine in liquid bleach}}{\text{% chlorine desired}} - 1 = \text{Total parts of water for each part bleach}
\]

\[
\frac{5\% \text{ chlorine in liquid bleach}}{0.1\% \text{ chlorine solution desired}} - 1 = \frac{5}{0.1} - 1 = 49 \ \text{parts of water for each part liquid bleach}
\]

- 49 ml water and 1 ml bleach = 50 ml
- 490 ml water and 10 ml bleach = 500 ml
- 980 ml water and 20 ml bleach = 1000 ml = 1 L
Preparation

✓ Mix any supermarket brand bleach and water to a 0.1% solution.

✓ Most supermarket brands are 2-5% sodium hypochlorite.

✓ The following table outlines how to prepare 1 litre 0.1% hypochlorite solution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original strength of bleach (% sodium hypochlorite)</th>
<th>Bleach (ml)</th>
<th>Water (ml)</th>
<th>Total (ml)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2%</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3%</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>967</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>975</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>980</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Always cover the bucket with a lid

Keep it in shade away from direct sunlight

Always stir the mixture very well and wait at least 30 minutes before use

Prepare solution fresh daily or frequently as needed
Cleaning and disinfection procedure

• Clean with detergent or soap and water to remove organic matter

• Apply the 0.1% solution to the surface with a cloth and allow for a contact time of at least 1 minute. After 1 minute has passed, rinse residue with clean water (this will also protect the surface or item from damage)

• Remove PPE and wash hands immediately.
Administrative and Engineering Controls

Restrictions

• Restrict mixing between groups/classes of students

• Avoid sharing books, supplies, games, or other learning aides; if sharing is necessary due to limited supply, clean and disinfect between different students

• Restrict extra-curricular activities, field trips, inter-group events and meetings
• Restrict entry of caregivers, non-essential visitors, and volunteers.

• Mark a “do not cross” point by the entrance and exit beyond which caregivers cannot cross during drop-off and pick-up using paint, chalk, or tape.

• Encourage caregivers to wear face coverings during drop-off and pick-up.

• Encourage caregivers not to exit cars/motorbikes/bicycles when dropping off/picking up children.
Physical Barriers and Guides

- Provide physical distancing guides, such as tape, paint, or chalk on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to ensure that staff and children remain at least 1 meter apart.

- Physical barriers, such as plastic or glass partitions, may be installed in areas where it is difficult for individuals to maintain physical distancing (e.g. reception desks)
Modify classroom layouts

- Space seating/desks at least 1 meters apart
- Face all desks/tables in the same direction.
Limit crowding

- Establish one-way circulation in hallways, classrooms, and school facilities

- Close communal spaces, such as indoor cafeterias and playgrounds

- Modify school schedules. Options include:
  - Staggering arrival/dismissal times and class breaks
  - Expanding timetable: schedule some students to attend classes in the morning, some in afternoon, and others in evening
  - Expanding school week: schedule some students to attend classes on certain days (e.g. Monday, Wednesday, Friday) and others to attend classes on remaining days (e.g. Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday)
• Consider Cohorting: Keep students and teachers in small groups that do not mix, also referred to as bubble, capsule or circle

• Consider open-air classes where feasible and if weather allows

• Do not hold assemblies

• Consider increasing the number of teachers to allow for fewer students per classroom

• Educate students and staff to not gather/socialize when coming to/leaving school and during class breaks
• Libraries can be reopened with limited opening hours using extra precautions

• Computer rooms can be reopened with a specified time table and social distancing protocols in place

• For laboratories, adjust schedule for different classes/sections/grades or add additional shifts to adhere to safety protocols
Ventilation
• Increase circulation of outdoor air within buildings by opening windows and doors

School Bus
• Clean and disinfect school buses before each shift, focusing on frequently touched surfaces
• Seat only one student per row or in every other seat if there are no rows
• Keep windows open
• Bus driver and passengers should wear masks
IPC policies

- Make hand hygiene obligatory upon entry and exit of the school
- Mandate all staff and students to wear a face mask while on school grounds
- Post signs with visual cues encouraging HH, use of masks and cough etiquette
IPC measures

• Ensure access to HH facilities by placing hand hygiene stations (hand washing stations or alcohol-based hand rub dispensers) at entrances, exits, within classrooms, and within 5 meters of toilets
Work and Sick policies

• Develop flexible attendance and sick leave policies for students and staff to stay home if they have tested positive for or are showing symptoms of COVID-19, or have come in close contact with someone who is sick

• Ensure staff will not lose wages while isolating or in quarantine

• Consider daily symptom screening upon entry for staff and students – do not allow anyone with a fever above 100.4 °F (38 °C) or with signs of illness to enter
Environmental Cleaning

- Cleaning staff should clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least twice a day, or more frequently if possible. If schools use an expanded timetable (e.g. one group of students attends in the morning and another in afternoon) cleaning and disinfection must occur between each session

- Provide cleaning staff with cleaning supplies (soap/detergent, bleach, buckets) and PPE

- Provide cleaning staff with information about when and how to clean and disinfect and how to safely prepare disinfectant solutions
Health Education

• Educate everyone in the school about prevention of COVID-19, including appropriate and frequent hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, use of mask, symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do when if one feels sick

Adequate Supplies

• Support healthy hygiene behaviors by providing adequate supplies including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 70% alcohol content, paper towels, tissues, face masks, cleaning supplies and no-touch/foot-pedal trash cans.
Food and Water

- Encourage staff and students to bring their own water to minimize use and touching of water taps/ fountains. Perform sanitization of taps regularly.

- Encourage children to bring their own meals

- School canteens should be preferably closed

- Use of disposable food service items may be considered

- Ensure that all non-disposable food service items are handled with gloves and washed with dish washing soap and hot water.
Waste disposal

- Waste bins with cover lid (preferably foot pedal operated) should be provided in every class for proper disposal of the used masks, tissues and other disposable material that comes in direct contact with the students and staff.

- School should have arrangement for the proper disposal of waste that is collected from classroom bins on a daily basis, while regular disinfection of the waste bins should be done regularly.
Psycho-social support

• Teachers and parents should encourage 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 and emphasize eating healthy, exercising, getting sleep, and finding time to relax.

• Teachers should encourage students to talk with people they trust about their concerns and how they are feeling.
References

- Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination, Health Guidelines for Education Institutions Reopening during COVID 19 Pandemic, 20 September 2020
- Centre for Disease Control & Prevention. Guidance and tools to help school administrators, December 9th 2020.
THANK YOU