

**Subject:- Guidelines on re-opening of Schools in areas outside Containment Zones.**

1.0 The Government of Punjab Department of Home Affairs and Justice Order No 7/56/2020/2H4/4012, dated Chandigarh, the 20<sup>th</sup> July 2021 State Government has allowed re-opening Schools for the classes 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> from 26-07-2021.

2.0 Following are the SOPs/guidelines for schools in the State of Punjab:

- I. The timing of the school will be as per the guidelines issued by the department time to time.
  - II. Only students of classes 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> will be called in school. No student of any other class will be called in the school.
  - III. If the strength of the students is large in the school and social distancing norms are not maintainable in that case School Head/Management may take a decision whether to hold the classes in two shifts or call the students at alternate days, at their own level.
  - IV. **Prior to reopening of schools**, arrangements shall be made for sensitization of teachers, parents, staff, and members of School Management Committee through online/offline modes such as pamphlets, letters, public announcement systems in religious places etc. on COVID appropriate behavior such as:
    - Required do's and don'ts including maintenance of hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces
    - Maintaining physical distance
    - Hygienic practices necessary for the prevention of COVID-19
    - Stigmas attached to COVID-19
    - Thermal screening for fever detection
    - Avoiding attending school if having symptoms and seeking medical care
- b) Staff and students belonging to containment zones shall not attend the school and other educational institutions until the containment zone is denotified.
  - c) Students and staff shall be advised not to visit areas falling within containment zone.

- d) The recommendations of MoHFW are to be followed, i.e., “All employees who are at higher risk i.e., older employees, pregnant employees and employees who have underlying medical conditions to take extra precautions. They should preferably not be exposed to any frontline work requiring direct contact with the students.

**VI. Ensure proper cleaning and sanitation facilities in the school**

- a) Arrange for thorough cleaning and disinfecting of all areas, furniture, equipment, stationery, storage places, water tanks, kitchens, canteen, washrooms, laboratories, libraries, etc. on school campus and ensure air flow in indoor space.
- b) Ensure working hand washing facilities in the school.
- c) Ensure availability of key supplies like thermometers, disinfectants, soaps, etc., and arrange for availability of these essentials. The thermometer to be used should be a calibrated contact-less infrared digital thermometer.
- d) Ensure sanitization of school transport before they start plying.
- e) Guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on Disinfection of Common Public Places available at <http://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/Guidelinesondisinfectionofcommonpublicplacesincludingoffices.pdf> may be referred to for suitable follow-up.

**VII. Form different Task Teams**

- a) Task Teams such as, Emergency Care Support/Response Team, General Support Team for all stakeholders, Commodity Support Team, Hygiene Inspection Team, etc. with earmarked responsibilities will be helpful.
- b) Teachers, students and other stakeholders deemed fit for being the members of these task forces may be identified to be the members of these task forces who will work collaboratively to take strategic and immediate actions.

## **VIII. Seating plan**

- a) There must be at least 6 feet distance between students in the revised seating plan. It is advisable to mark the seating that students should occupy.
- b) If there are single-seater desks, simply providing space between the desks in the classrooms to maintain physical/social distancing of 6 feet will be effective. If benches are used, one child one bench norm may be considered.
- c) Similarly, physical/social distancing shall also be maintained in the staff rooms, office area, and other places of public interaction.
- d) If available, temporary space or outdoor spaces (in case of pleasant weather) may be utilized for conducting classes, keeping in view the safety and security of the children and physical distance protocols
- e) Seats may be designated with adequate distance for teachers in the staff room and other available rooms/halls.
- f) The number of seats in the reception area may be limited with at least 6 feet distance between them.

## **IX. Ensure Physical / social distancing at the Entry and Exit**

### **Points of the School**

- i. Staggering the timing of entry and exit for students of different classes.
  - ii. Earmarking different lanes for coming and going.
  - iii. Opening all the gates at the time of entry and exit, in case school has more than one gate and earmarking classes for each gate to avoid crowding.
  - iv. Making announcements through Public Announcement System to guide parents/guardians and students to maintain physical/social distancing.
- X Schools will make their own SOPs based upon guidelines issued by State for the following keeping in view the safety and physical/social distancing norms and ensuring that the notices/posters/messages/communication to

parents in this regard are prominently displayed/disseminated:

- Library and Laboratory
- Break Time
- Regular Cleaning and Disinfection of school infrastructure
- Use of School Transport
- Private pick up and drop off facility
- Monitor and Plan for Absenteeism of both staff and students
- Information Sharing System with partners
- Dealing with emergency situation
- Visit of service providers, parents and other visitors to school

**XI Display Signages and markings for enforcing physical/social distancing and safety protocols -**

- a) Displaying posters/messages/stickers and signage at appropriate places in the school reminding students about maintaining physical/social distancing such as inside the classroom, libraries, outside washrooms, hand washing stations, drinking water areas, school kitchen, halls, classrooms, buses/ cabs parking, entry and exits.
- b) Ban on spitting shall be strictly enforced.
- c) Marking circles on ground at different places like reception, water facility stations, hand washing stations, area outside washrooms, and other areas.
- d) Marking separate lanes with arrows for coming and going at all possible places in school to avoid physical contact.

**XII School events, congregations, meetings, etc.**

- a) Schools will not undertake school events where physical/social distancing is not possible.
- b) Functions and celebration of festivals shall be avoided in schools
- c) However, school assembly may be conducted by the students in their respective classrooms or outdoor spaces or other available spaces and halls under the guidance of the class teacher.
- d) Likewise, if possible, virtual parent teacher meetings can be

arranged.

- e) During the process of admission to new classes, only parents/guardians may be consulted. Children need not accompany parents as far as possible.
- f) Efforts may be made to conduct admissions online wherever possible.

### **XIII Parent's/Guardian's consent**

- a) Schools shall take the consent of parents/guardians before their child/ward begins attending schools.
- b) Students willing to study from home with the consent of the parents may be allowed to do so.
- c) Follow-up on the progress of the learning outcomes of all such students may be planned appropriately.

### **XIV Ensure Safe Commuting of Students**

- a) Sanitization of school transportation on regular basis at least twice a day – once before children board the transport and once after.
- b) School Driver and conductor should maintain physical distance at all times and ensure physical/social distancing among students in the bus/cab.
- c) A minimum physical distance of 6 feet should be maintained during seating. Staggering of school timings/days/shifts may be essential for ensuring this. Wherever possible, more buses may be arranged.
- d) If possible, thermal screening of students may be done by the bus conductor at the time of their boarding the bus.
- e) All commuters to wear face cover/masks in the bus/cab. School transport should not permit children without masks to board buses.
- f) No curtains on windows in the bus/cab.
- g) Preferably keep all windows open.
- h) For air-conditioned buses/cabs, the guidelines issued by CPWD shall be followed which include temperature setting at 24-30°C, relative humidity at 40-70% with provision for intake of fresh air (available at:

[https://cpwd.gov.in/WriteReadData/other\\_cir/45567.pdf](https://cpwd.gov.in/WriteReadData/other_cir/45567.pdf).)

- i) Students may be oriented not to touch surfaces unnecessarily. If possible, hand sanitizer may be kept in the bus/cab.
- j) Students may be advised to patiently wait for their turn to board or alight from the vehicle keeping a safe distance.
- k) As far as possible, parents may be encouraged to use their personal transport to drop their children to school.
- l) Students commuting through public transport should be adequately guided by schools to take all precautions such as – physical/social distancing, covering nose and mouth with up face cloth/masks, sanitizing hands when touching any surface etc.
- m) Private cabs or carpooling may be discouraged as far as possible.

**XV Ensure Safe Residential Stay at Hostel:**

- a) Temporary partitions may be erected to separate inmates/boarders. Adequate distance between beds may be ensured.
- b) Physical/social distancing must be maintained all the times in hostels. Signage and messaging at prominent places will be important.
- c) Alternative space may be arranged to accommodate students to enable physical/social distancing.
- d) Initial preference for calling students to join back hostels may be given to students who do not have any support at home and also no facility for on-line education.
- e) Students of higher classes may be called first as per accommodation facility of the school.
- f) Screening of every boarder needs to be done before they start staying at the hostel. Only asymptomatic boarders should be allowed to join.
- g) Since students may be coming from different locations by using public transports such as buses, trains, etc., it is important that they should minimize their contact and interaction with others on arrival at hostel, and effectively maintain quarantine as per requirement. Their health status should be monitored during the period.
- h) Arrangement for a regular visit of Counselor teacher or a Counselor

needs to be ensured to take care of any mental or emotional health issue of the students.

- i) Hostel should be out of bound for all persons except essential staff with known health status.
- j) Visiting medical team may inspect kitchen and mess at least once a week to ensure maintenance of hygiene.
- k) Capacity building of hostel staff should be done on physical/social distancing norms, health, and hygiene, clean and nutritious food, etc., for the hostellers.
- l) Availability of good quality Wi-Fi connection, cable connection for Television and Radio may be ensured. These facilities should be used as per norms of physical/social distancing.

**XVI Collect information:**

- a) From students, parents and teachers:

In the form of self-declaration regarding their health condition, Arogya Setu health assessment/ COVA app, recent travels abroad or inter-state, and decide if the person will require additional time away from school.

- b) From local administration:

About the State and district help lines and the nearest COVID Centre and other contact details for dealing with emergency.

**XVII Parents /guardians may take the following steps:**

- a) Provide written consent for their children to attend school if they wish to send to school.
- b) Ensure that their ward goes to school wearing a mask and sensitise them not to exchange masks with others. Masks can be made at home also. Face masks made of cloth may be reused after thorough washing with soap. Disposable face masks are to be disposed safely.
- c) Encourage their ward to wear full-sleeved clothes to minimize the interaction with any public surface.

- d) Parents may take care not to send their ward to school if the child is not feeling well.
- e) Drop and pick children from school, as far as possible. If sent by school bus then maintain physical/social distancing and ensure that everyone is wearing a mask.
- f) Ask their ward to practice physical/social distancing at all times once she/he leaves home.
- g) Clean and sanitize their ward's uniform and other belongings daily.
- h) Ensure that their ward maintains personal hygiene such as bathing, brushing teeth properly twice a day (in the morning and before sleeping) and trimming of nails.
- i) Provide two clean small napkins/clean cloth daily with their ward for wiping hands.
- j) Parents should advise their wards that they will not share their tiffin and water bottle with others.
- k) It is advisable that parents/guardians download the AAROGYASETU/COVA APP and let their ward commute only when the App shows safe and low-risk status.

#### **XVIII District level task force**

A District Level Task Force will be created involving DIETs, DEOs and other identified stakeholders for making random visits to schools for observing their preparedness and safe operations. This task force will also prepare a database on the requirements of schools for safe functioning and adequate learning achievements.

**XIX** Anything which is not mentioned in these guidelines, then SOPs issued by Department of School Education and Literacy (attached) will be followed.