

Dear ACSI Member School Principal

**Re: SCHOOL INFORMATION FOR COMMUNICABLE DISEASES
COVID 19 Virus (CORONAVIRUS)**

There is much activity, concern and speculation around the Coronavirus. This letter serves to assist schools to be proactive in handling of the situation in each school. Please note the following suggestions:

1. Communication with Parents.

Please write a letter to your parents explaining the school's current position on the Coronavirus and giving them basic information and preventative measures.

This letter could include the following:

- Basic facts about the virus and how it is transmitted.
- What schools are doing as preventative measures.
- What the school process will be if a member of the school community is found to have the virus.
- Where parents should potentially go for assistance for the flu-like symptoms.
- What the school's expectation is for a child that is ill
- How the school will communicate to parents in case of emergency.

Click bellow to view a [sample letter](#) the school can write to parents.

[CLICK HERE](#)

2. Communication

The National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) has a toll-free number that deals with Covid-19 questions: **0800 029 999**.

Ensure that the school has a clear process of how to communicate with parents within a short time. Whether the schools make use of WhatsApp, D6 or email. Check that your system is working, and all parent details are accessible and correct.

3. Process in case of reported infection.

School to determine a clear process of action steps to take in case of a reported infection within the school community:

- Any learner or staff member presenting with Coronavirus symptoms be advised to seek immediate medical advice telephonically and then proceed to the medical centre to which their General Practitioner directs them
- If confirmed as being ill with Coronavirus they are then advised to self-quarantine at home for a minimum period of twenty-one days. Such a person should produce a doctor's clearance certificate upon returning to school.

- Stay informed on the status of the Novel Coronavirus, the affected areas and identification of symptoms.
- If people have been travelling in an affected area and are showing symptoms, contact a doctor telephonically immediately and follow their recommendations. Avoid travelling to affected areas.
- Practice good hygiene as advised above: for example, sneeze or cough into a flexed elbow, or use a tissue and discard it immediately into a closed bin. It is also very important for people to wash their hands regularly with either alcohol-based hand sanitiser or soap and water

[The National Operating Procedures for Preparedness, Detection and Response to a Coronavirus Outbreak in South Africa](#). This is a lengthy document but outlines the National Department procedures. To view this document.

CLICK HERE

4. Media Coverage.

The school must prepare for potential media coverage. The school's Media Policy should be followed.

- Ensure that a media liaison officer is appointed to handle all calls, emails, interviews etc. This could be the principal, a member of the Board or a teacher/parent with the skill of handling the media.
- Instruct teachers not to speak directly to the press or to make any comment on social media. Communicate the facts, school processes are clearly and regularly communicated to staff.
- Instruct parents to not speak to the media, but to refer all matters directly to the school.

Please click below to view [ACSI Web Media Policy](#)

CLICK HERE

5. In the case of a School Closure.

Schools are encouraged to plan for possible closure. (This may be for a period of up to two weeks.)

- Planning should include:
Academic work that could be completed at home. (Project work, Set-work reading)
Possible communication networks between learner and teacher – WhatsApp groups etc.
School Leadership should plan to keep in contact with the teachers regarding the work they may need to complete whilst at home etc.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS

The following links will provide you with good information about the virus. Good knowledge about the facts helps you handle some of the myths that are circulated:

- Questions and answers links

<https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/novel-coronavirus-china/questions-answers>

<https://www.gov.za/NovelCoronavirus>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/share-facts-h.pdf>

- Testing. Lancet Laboratories is offering a service for the testing of the virus. This is a costly service. Refer to the article by following the link below.

<https://www.timeslive.co.za/sunday-times/news/2020-03-08-south-africans-can-get-private-coronavirus-tests-from-monday/>

TEACHER RESOURCES

- Teacher, Learner and Parent Awareness. It would be important for the school to collectively communicate relevant information about the virus to the community. Teachers to speak to learners about the preventative measures to take. Share this information with parents and all staff members within the school.

The following links for teacher resources may be useful:

[ACSI Poster](#)

[5 Steps](#)

- Pre-Schools Information Link:
Click below to read the article about Reducing the Spread of Illness in Child Care.

[CLICK HERE](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Additional resources from the ACSI International Community

[CLICK HERE](#)

The World Health Organisation has [FREE](#) Online Courses about the Coronavirus.

[CLICK HERE](#)

As a community of believers, may we not be surprised or troubled by the many things that come to harm, distract and destroy. May we be wise in the counsel He gives us and be agents of life and light in our communities.

John 14:14 Jesus Comforts His Disciples.

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not be afraid.”

Yours sincerely

Sean Moore

Director: ACSI Southern Africa