



## **ST MARTIN'S PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL** **COVID-19 POLICY**

### **1. OBJECTIVES**

- 1.1 The aim of this policy is to ensure a safe working environment for all employees, teachers and learners to stop the spread of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 "COVID-19" virus. Section 8 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 "OHSA" requires every employer to provide and maintain, as far as reasonably practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risks to the health of its employees, teachers and learners. Similarly, the OHSA also imposes a duty on employees to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of their fellow employees, teachers and learners.
- 1.2 Information pertaining to COVID-19 is being provided by various authorities on a regular basis and it is important to ensure that updates are obtained and disseminated through the organisation. Please refrain from forwarding information related to the virus without having checked it with credible sources such as the World Health Organisation "WHO" and the National Institute for Communicable Diseases "NICD". Spreading unverified information may contribute to unnecessary panic, stigma and discrimination, all of which do not add value.
- 1.3 This policy is susceptible to changes with the introduction of additional governmental guidelines and accordingly will be updated if, and when, required.

### **2. APPLICATION**

This policy includes measures being taken to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. You are kindly requested to follow all these requirements to sustain a healthy and safe workplace. It is important that we all respond responsibly and transparently to these health precautions.

### **3. CONTENT**

#### **3.1 *How does COVID-19 spread?***

COVID-19 is most likely to spread when there is close contact (1.5 metres or less) with an infected person. It is likely that the risk increases as the period of exposure to an infected person lengthens. Contaminated droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes are the main means of transmission. There are two main routes by which people can spread COVID-19:

- Infection can be spread to people who are nearby as droplets are inhaled into the lungs.
- It is also possible that someone may become infected by touching a surface, object or the hand of an infected person who has been contaminated and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes.

### 3.2 **Primary symptoms of COVID-19**

The following symptoms may develop up to 21 days after exposure to someone who has COVID-19:

- Cough
- Sore throat
- Fever
- Shortness of breath/ difficulty in breathing
- Redness of eyes
- Body aches
- Loss of smell
- Loss of taste
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Fatigue
- Weakness

Infections can cause more severe symptoms in people who are over the age of 60 and those with compromised immune systems such as diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease.

### 3.3 **What to do if you develop symptoms?**

People who contract COVID-19 may take anywhere from one to twenty-one days to develop symptoms. Even if you do not have a history of travel to a COVID-19 affected region or contact with an individual who has contracted the illness, you must still inform your healthcare provider if you present with symptoms. Call the COVID-19 Hotline for the Department of Health website: <https://www.health.gov.za/covid-19>

South African COVID 19 HOTLINE  
08000 29999



If you present with symptoms of Corona Virus, please call the official COVID 19 HOTLINE before going to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. By calling the hotline, someone will be sent to test you where you are, which will limit the spread of the virus.

Employees should notify their Principal and stay at home if they are sick and have been booked off. All employees should follow St Martin's's sick leave policy in such situations. If St Martin's has reason to suspect that an employee has been infected with COVID-19 or an employee becomes ill at work, the employer will request the employee to leave the workplace and seek medical treatment and/or testing immediately.

### 3.4 **Quarantine and working from home**

If an employee has been in close contact with an individual who has since been diagnosed with COVID-19, the employee/teacher must immediately inform their employer and contact the COVID-19 Hotline. Close contact means that the employee was in face-to-face contact (i.e. within 1.5 metres) or in a closed space for more than 15 minutes with a person with COVID-19.

If, after informing the Department of Health, the employee is required to self-quarantine then the following policies will apply:

- If the employee is able to work during this period, then there is no requirement to submit a sick leave or annual leave request. The employee is, however, required to report daily to their Head / manager.



- Should the employee/teacher become sick during this period, then normal sick leave policy will apply, if the employee's sick leave entitlement under the section is exhausted, management make application for an illness benefit in terms of clause 4 of the Directive issued on 25 March 2020 on the COVID-19 Temporary Employer Relief Scheme under regulation 10(8) of the Regulations promulgated in terms of section 27(2) of the Disaster Management Act.

### 3.5 **Travel**

All domestic flight travel is suspended until further notice unless absolutely necessary as determined by the parties concerned. Local travel will still be required but must be done in line with current protocols of low contact and high hygiene. All non-essential travel, particularly on public transport, is discouraged.

- Everybody to sanitize hands on entering of the buses;
- The distance between learners in the buses must be managed; and
- The wearing of masks throughout the school day, starting before boarding transport, is compulsory.

### 3.6 **Meetings**

- Consider whether a face-to-face meeting or event is needed - could it be replaced by a teleconference or any other electronic platform.
- Could the meeting be scaled down so that fewer people attend?
- Ensure that all participants in the meeting have washed their hands for 20 seconds or utilised a hand sanitiser prior to the meeting commencing.
- Ensure that all delegates are seated at least one and a half metre apart.
- The names and contact details of all participants in the meeting should be retained for at least one month. This may be done through the completion of a register and will assist healthcare authorities in tracing those who have been exposed to COVID-19 if a participant does become ill with the virus shortly after the meeting.
- If a participant should contract the virus shortly after the meeting, St Martin's must inform all participants.

### 3.7 **Hygiene in the workplace and classrooms**

- All visitors, employees, teachers and learners entering the offices must be requested by the receptionist to wash their hands or utilise a hand sanitiser on entering the premises.
- Coughs and sneezes must be covered with a tissue; the tissue must be disposed of in the relevant waste bin.
- Frequently touched objects, including workstations and surfaces, must be cleaned and disinfected using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, an alcohol-based hand sanitiser with at least 70% alcohol must be used.
- Handshakes with any staff or visitors must be AVOIDED; one's face should not be touched either.
- Physical distances in classrooms, includes not more than 2 learners sharing desks;
- No hugging or handshaking.
- Direct contact must be avoided.

- Cloth masks or Shields to be worn by learners, teachers/staff and parents at all times.
- No mass public events. All sports matches, choir practices and festivals, eisteddfods, assemblies and chapel services are not permitted; and
- Extra classes should be arranged in small groups that maintain social distancing.
- Sanitize classrooms prior to the start of school day.
- sanitize hands on entering of classrooms.
- Limit movement of learners between classes; and
- No clustering of desks in classrooms.

The DBE has developed Guidelines for schools on maintaining hygiene during the COVID-19 pandemic to provide recommendations on the proper cleaning, and use of Personal Protective Equipment, based on risk exposure including:

- Basic principles of infection prevention and control.
- Risk reduction methods for schools, classrooms, toilets or bathrooms, offices, and food preparation areas.
- Daily duties of cleaners; and
- How to use Personal Protective Equipment.
- Screening and testing
- Screening of learners and educators will be done at the reopening of schools, starting with Grades 7 and 12. Temperature checks will be administered; and
- Learners or staff members who present with raised temperatures, will then be considered for isolation and testing.

### 3.8 ***Wearing face masks***

The use of face masks covering the mouth and nose is compulsory, when in public, entering any building, premises, work and when utilising public transport. Persons without a face mask will not be permitted to enter the worksite, as required by Chapter 5(1) and 5(2) of the Risk Adjustment Strategy Regulations (29 April 2020).

### 3.9 ***Seminars, Training and Conferences***

No employee may attend external seminars, training or conferences, unless approved by the Executive Head.

### 3.10 ***COVID-19 Manager***

A COVID-19 Manager will be appointed to ensure the implementation of and adherence to Standard Operating Procedures for the risk mitigation of COVID-19 in the workplace, as required by Government Notice NO. 479 29 APRIL 2020 - 479 Disaster Management Act (57/2002): Covid- 19 Occupational Health and Safety Measures in Workplaces Covid-19 (C19 OHS), 2020 and the Risk Adjustment Strategy Regulations of 29 April 2020. It is recommended that a COVID-19 Response Team is also appointed to assist, where necessary, with the implementation of and adherence to Standard Operating Procedures for the risk mitigation of COVID-19 in the workplace.

### 3.11 ***COVID-19 Compliance Officer***

A COVID-19 Compliance Officer will be appointed, which may be the same appointee as the COVID-19 Manager. The Compliance Officer is required to develop a plan for the phased in return of employees to the workplace, prior to reopening the workplace for business. The plan must include the following:

- Which employees are permitted to work;
- What the plans for the phased-in return of their employees to the workplace are;
- What health protocols are in place to protect employees from COVID-19; and
- The details of the COVID-19 Compliance Officer;

### 3.12 **Consequence of breach**

If an employee breaches this policy the necessary disciplinary action will be taken. It is important to note that St Martin's sick leave policy will not be adjusted or become flexible during the outbreak of COVID-19. The normal sick leave policy which is in line with Labour Law will still apply.

It is the employee's responsibility to contact management should he/she have any queries related to this Policy.