



POLICY FOR BOARDING HOUSES AT KING EDWARD VII SCHOOL ADDRESSING COVID-19

POLICY FOR MANAGEMENT OF CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) AT KING EDWARD VII BOARDING HOUSES COVID

The policy below has been created in reaction to the pandemic known as Coronavirus (Covid-19) and with specific reference to the Boarding Establishments at King Edward VII School. The policy has been created in consultation with Peer Schools, medical practitioners and publications made by the National Institute for Communicable Diseases as well as the publications from the South African Department of Health. Furthermore, all dates of return and "best practices" as well as the creating of this policy is done in accordance with the Department of Basic Education (DBE) guidelines as well as their directives.

All policies have a review date; however, this policy will be updated regularly with advice from relevant bodies and/or organizations as and when new verified information is shared. The situation regarding Covid-19 is dynamic and therefore this policy may be amended regularly due to an ever-evolving situation.

The educators and staff at the Boarding Houses will be advised and guided by professionals, that being in the field of medicine as well as various Departments of the Government, namely DBE (Department of Basic Education), Department of Health, NICD (National Institute for Communicable Diseases) as well as NIOH (National Institute for Occupational Health).

UNDERSTANDING COVID-19

The information found below is a brief explanation of Covid-19 so there is a basis for an understanding of policy. The information has been taken directly from the Department of Health, republic of South Africa

<https://sacoronavirus.co.za/information-about-the-virus-2/>

- **What is COVID-19?**

Human Coronaviruses are common throughout the world. There are many different coronaviruses identified in animals but only a small number of these can cause disease in humans.

On 7 January 2020, 'Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2' (SARS-CoV-2) was confirmed as the causative agent of 'Coronavirus Disease 2019' or COVID-19. The majority of the case-patients initially identified were dealers and vendors at a seafood, poultry and live wildlife market in China. Since then, the virus has spread to more than 100 countries, including South Africa.

- **Who is most at risk?**

Currently, travellers to areas where there is ongoing sustained transmission of COVID-19 including Mainland China (all provinces), Hong Kong, Japan, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Vietnam, Taiwan, Italy and the Islamic Republic of Iran are at greatest risk of infection.

Furthermore, the elderly, individuals with co-morbidities and healthcare workers have been found to be at a higher risk of death.



- **How is it transmitted?**

While the first cases probably involved exposure to an animal source, the virus now seems to be spreading from person-to-person.

The spread of the disease is thought to happen mainly via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how influenza and other respiratory pathogens spread. Thus far, the majority of cases have occurred in people with close physical contact to cases and healthcare workers caring for patients with COVID-19.

- **What are the symptoms of COVID-19?**

Current symptoms reported for patients with COVID-19 have included mild to severe respiratory illness with cough, sore throat, shortness of breath or fever.

The complete clinical picture with regard to COVID-19 is still not fully clear. Reported illnesses have ranged from infected people with little to no symptoms to people being severely ill and dying.

- **How is COVID-19 treated?**

Treatment is supportive (providing oxygen for patients with shortness of breath or treating a fever, for example). To date, there is no specific antiviral treatment available. Antibiotics do not treat viral infections. However, antibiotics may be required if a bacterial secondary infection develops.

- **How can you prevent infection?**

The following can provide protection against infection from Coronaviruses and many other viruses that are more common in South Africa:

- 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.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay at home when you are sick and try and keep a distance from others at home.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a flexed elbow or a tissue, then throw the tissue in the bin.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

PRESENT SITUATION:

All Public Schools including their Boarding houses were closed due to a Nationwide Lockdown. A staggered approach of reopening has started with the Grade 12 learners being permitted to attend school as from 1 June 2020.

PROPOSED STAGGERED RETURN OF LEARNERS:

A staggered return of learners is dictated to King Edward VII School by the DBE as the School is a public School. In all probability the return of learners will be staggered which is best practice for social distancing. A staggered return means that different grades will enter at different days/dates with a time period between each grade. Matric Learners (Grade 12) will enter school first. Thereafter it will work in a



hierarchical manner with Grade 11's, then Grade 10's following and thereafter the GET Phase namely Grade 9 and finally Grade 8.

Extracts of this policy below have been adapted and are taken from the National Institute for Occupational Health www.nioh.ac.za as well as from slides during certain webinars present.

HAND WASHING:

Regular washing of hand will take place, Housemasters, duty masters as well as 'stooges' and mentors are to facilitate compulsory hand washing, especially in junior grades namely grade 8 and 9. This 'over and above' the 'regular' hand washing that a learner may do. This is before every meal as well as before 'lights out'.

Washing of hands should happen when:

- On leaving the Boarding house to attend School.
- On leaving of home to return to Boarding House.
- After using the toilet/urinal.
- After breaks, sporting or physical activities.
- Before food preparation.
- Before meals.
- Before eating any food, including snacks.

HAND SANITIZERS:

Hand sanitizers have been installed in strategic areas for easy accessibility and use, both at the school as well as at the Boarding Establishments.

SOAP DISPENSERS:

New soap dispensers have been installed. These, as per current practice must be checked daily, to ensure they are in working order and have liquid soap.

PAPER TOWEL DISPENSERS:

New paper towel dispensers have been installed in each bathroom/showerblock.

SOCIAL DISTANCING:

- Implemented for dormitories, dining room and common areas in boarding houses.
- Social distancing will be best practiced and applied as per norms and standards prescribed.
- Visiting in dormitories will be banned and meeting of friends will take place in larger well-ventilated areas like the common gardens. Groups not larger than 10 people at a time and social distancing must be practiced.



- Common rooms must be limited to number of learners at a time with adequate distancing.
- Common garden areas are areas where learner can congregate and may do so in limited numbers with adequate distancing. A recommendation for them when they are wanting to get outdoors, as such, is to use the school fields where there is greater spacing between learners.

SHOWERING TIMES:

- Showering times will have to be flexible, allowing boarders to shower/clean in small groups throughout the late afternoon and evening. Showering will be also be allowed before breakfast/school from 06h00.
- If sporting events start or any form of physical activities, it will be **compulsory** to shower before dinner/meal from a hygiene perspective.
- Grade 12's as the first group entering, particularly at Buxton, must use more shower blocks or bathrooms to avoid social contract. Senior Housemaster at Buxton to coordinate accordingly. Senior Housemaster to allocate bathrooms accordingly and publish lists.
- As and when other grades enter as proposed recommendations, policy will be amended as well as procedures.

DORMITORIES:

- Staggered return dates will assist with regards to social distancing.
- With the eventual phasing in of other grades the number of learners will rise.
- As this Covid-19 policy is 'fluid', dorm allocation will be reviewed as per levels of lockdown.

FEDICS (SUPPLIER AND CATERER):

- The current service provider FEDICS has supplied the management of the School its plan on how it is managing Covid-19 in their space (school kitchen and dining room). This includes how they are educating their staff to prevent possible contamination and spreading of Covid-19 within their own workspace as well as protecting the staff and learners of the school.
- Fedics have confirmed their commitment to upholding and implementing all the prescribed health amendments and rules.

MANAGEMENT OF SICK BAY:

- Guided by the professionals, namely the school doctor/consulting doctor or medical practitioner, Heath Department as well as Mibern Medi-call (service provider).
- Follow protocol set out by Government and what has been published as per best practice.
- Sick-bay a temporary place for weekly boarders – return home protocol for weekly boarders within **8 hours**.
- Termly boarders to be quarantined and returned home within **24 hours**.
- Testing through thermometers and active monitoring.



- Sickbay can only house effectively 8 learners at a time and therefore weekly boarders who exhibit symptoms must be sent home with instruction to be checked by a medical professional.
- Additional space has been allocated as temporary sickbays for learners who have other illness or symptoms **NOT** related to Covid-19. Namely downstairs dormitory/tutor room by Mr E Marx's (Senior Housemaster) flat which is used for tutors and for festivals only. This can accommodate 2 - 3 learners. Furthermore, if emergencies arise, the vacant outside dormitory which is used for festivals only, adjacent to the 'stooges' accommodation, can accommodate up to 8 learners. These will be temporary sickbays if needed. Isolation will occur in the sickbay area only, to ensure that constant monitoring can occur.
- Termly boarders to be taken to doctor (not at school expense) or hospital when or if required.
- Only learners with a 'clearance certificate' may return, after being ill, and may enter back into boarding to prevent further infection in communal living. In other words that they (learner) have been cleared by medical professional to return.
- Early detection of symptoms:
 1. Isolate in sick bay.
 2. Early referral for appointment, treatment and care.

PREVENTION OF SPREAD

- Prompt identification.
- Quarantining in sick bay.
- Effective return to Boarding School practices.

MANAGEMENT OF BOARDING LEARNERS WITH SYMPTOMS:

- Guided by the health professionals.
- Follow protocol set out by Government.
- Any learner who feels ill will report to the Senior housemaster to assess. He will then accordingly be sent to the Sick bay for assessment. This is normal procedure. However, the Senior housemaster is now more aware of possible symptoms and any of these symptoms displayed will be escalated to sick bay for an assessment.

GUIDELINES FOR LEARNERS AND STAFF:

SELF-MONITORING:

- Learners and staff can monitor themselves and check or feel for increased temperature. If staff or learners are concerned or have any doubt, they are to report to the sick bay for their temperature to be taken effectively.
- Learners or staff must report to sick bay or consult Senior Housemaster for referral to sick bay if they develop a fever.



ACTIVE MONITORING:

- There must, through the Senior Housemasters and Duty masters, be regular communication with learners and staff who have potentially been exposed, to assess for the presence of a fever or symptoms of Covid-19 as understood.
- Communication through the senior Housemaster and Duty Master with and between the sick bay at least 2 x day. Once in the morning and once in the evening.
- Temperature to be taken before or at mealtimes and at 'lights out' in the evening.

TYPES OF SCREENING IN THE BOARDING HOUSES:

- **Temperature screening:** The Boarding Houses will be 'steered' or instructed by the sickbay who will temperature screen when a staff member or learner exhibits a temperature.
 1. Temperature measured for a temperature of 38°C or above.
 2. There is an understanding that a fever may be intermittent or not present in some patients.
 3. If a staff member or learner has a temperature of more than 38°C they will have to be evaluated by a medical practitioner to establish if they have other symptoms such as muscle aches, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, runny nose or loss of taste.

IF A LEARNER BOARDER PRESENTS SYMPTOMS:

- Provided with a face mask if they do not have one. Face masks are compulsory.
- Report to sickbay.
- Parents contacted.
- Referred to medical practitioner, clinic or hospital if required.
- On receiving results, the learner through his parents or guardian must notify the Boarding House and School.
- If a test is positive for Covid-19 the NICD will also be notified.

RETURNING TO BOARDING HOUSE:

- A 'clearance certificate' is needed for a learner/staff member to return to boarding from a medical practitioner, clinic or hospital on return.
- A learner or staff member may only return once ALL symptoms have been resolved and that 14 (fourteen) days have passed once onset of symptoms.
- Boarders or staff members who have returned after isolation or quarantine should follow the general guidelines:
 1. Have undergone medical evaluation (receive clearance certificate) that they may return and be at the Boarding House.
 2. Wearing of surgical or material (approved) mask.
 3. Appropriate social distancing.
 4. Continued self-monitoring.
 5. Seek medical re-evaluation if respiratory symptoms reoccur.



MANAGEMENT OF ANXIETY/STRESS OF LEARNERS AND STAFF:

- Guided by the professionals. Mr P Galbraith the school counselling psychologist to advise. Any learners showing anxiety or distress are to be referred to Mr Paul Galbraith by the Senior Housemaster.
- Staff have access to the staff wellness programme 'Ask Nelson'.
- Within tutor groups regular assessment to prevail. Tutors are to see and 'touch base' more regularly with those in their groups (small) to monitor levels of stress and anxiety amongst learners/boarders.
- Management of staff and learners, including prejudice and anxiety with regards to people contracting 'regular seasonal flu'.

EXTREMELY VULNERABLE:

Senior Housemasters to identify learners or staff who are extremely vulnerable:

- Solid organ transplant patients.
- Cancer patients:
 1. Chemotherapy, radiotherapy or other ongoing or recent treatment.
 2. Cancers of the blood.
 3. Stem cell transplants in the last 6 months.
- Severe respiratory conditions such as:
 1. Cystic fibrosis.
 2. Asthma.
 3. Severe chronic obstructive pulmonary (COPD).
 4. Learners and staff on immunosuppression therapies.
 5. Pregnant staff with heart disease, congenital or other.
- Other vulnerable learners and staff:
 1. Age greater than 60 years.
 2. Cardiovascular disease.
 3. Diabetes mellitus.
 4. Chronic renal disease.
 5. Staff or learners on immunosuppression therapies.
 6. HIV diagnosed who are virally suppressed.

OPENING OF BOARDING HOUSES:

- Reinforce the need for standard precautions.
 1. Wearing of masks.
 2. Social distancing.
 3. Cough and sneeze etiquette.
 4. Sanitize.



5. Wash hands regularly and for a minimum of 20 seconds.

- Stress importance of hand hygiene, cough etiquette and respiratory hygiene.
- Have staff and learners regularly self-monitor for fever and symptoms.
- Remind staff to avoid reporting for work when ill and that learners report to sick-bay when ill.

STAFF AND LEARNERS REGARDING PPE:

- Masks compulsory.
- Washing hands regularly.
- Using supplied soap and sanitiser.

CALL OVERS/ROLLCALL:

- Done in dormitories to avoid large groups.

MEALS (COMMON DINING ROOM):

- **Breakfast** staggered at present. Dining room opening at 06h30 for Grade 12's. Learner groups to be identified. Duty masters present to facilitate 3 x sittings at present:
 1. Sitting 1 at 06h30
 2. Sitting 2 t 06h45
 3. Sitting 3 at 07h00
- **Lunch** will be staggered as per 'X' and 'Y' split:
 1. Second Break sitting 1 at 13h10 – 13h40
 2. Second Break sitting 2 at 13h40 – 14h10
- **Teatime** first break:
 1. At present abandoned as such, however learners will receive a snack and juice/milk, in proper 'long life' containers at breakfast to be consumed at first break to compensate for no 'teatime' at break and they will take and consume at school during break.
 2. Teatime or first break is also broken into 2 sessions to assist with reduced numbers on the school fields and so social distancing is easy to practice. First break 1 at 10h30 – 11h00 and First Break 2 at 11h00-11h30.
- **Supper:**
 1. Group 1 to be served at 17h30.
 2. Group 2 to be served at 17h45.
 3. Group 3 to be served at 18h00.
 4. Learners and staff must take cognisance of the fact that Fedics need time to clean and clear kitchen and use public transport before the imposed curfew of 20h00. Therefore NO loitering or sitting around in the dining room.
- Hands to be washed and sanitized before entry into dining room.



- As and when other grades enter the boarding houses as per proposed recommendations, policy will be amended as well as procedures.
- Please note that the dining room can seat over 300 people, therefore with grade 12's entering first they will be 'spread out' accordingly and have the relevant social distancing.

CLEANING AND SANITIZING OF DORMITORIES, TOILETS, BATHROOMS, COMMON ROOMS, DINING ROOMS AND KITCHEN:

- Professional outsource and approved company completed sanitizing on the 27 April 2020 of all 3 x Boarding Houses.
- The Boarding Houses were deeply cleaned, including mattresses just before the "lockdown".
- Use of correct disinfectants.
- Aware of porous, non-porous and semi-porous surfaces.
- Aware of following for cleaning products to be used by cleaning staff:
 1. Concentrations.
 2. Ingredients.
 3. Applications.
 4. Storage.
 5. pH.
 6. Contact time.
 7. Compliance.
- **Safety and cleaning agents:**
 1. Product labels and instructions.
 2. Wash hands.
 3. Moisturize.
 4. Increase air circulation.
 5. Correct use of PPE.
 6. Contractors must be appropriately approved.
- Dormitories will be cleaned and sanitized when learners leave for school.
- Ablutions will be cleaned in the morning and afternoon.

VISITORS:

- Visitor protocol to be followed as per the School and Government Policy.
- Essentially there are **NO** visitors to Boarding.
- Visitors, i.e. parents 'dropping' off work, washing etc. will be discouraged/not allowed.
- **NO** food or take-out deliveries at all, this is an extension of the House rules. See Boarding Establishment rules.
- **NO** tutors allowed in the Boarding establishments.



MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ON COVID-19 IS AVAILABLE ON THE FOLLOWING WEBSITES AND SOURCES:

- National Department of Health: <http://www.health.gov.za>
- National Institute for Communicable Diseases: <https://www.nicd.ac.za>
- National Institute for Occupational Health: <http://www.nioh.ac.za>
- World Health Organization: <https://www.who.int>
- Department of Basic Education: <https://www.education.gov.za>
- National Health Laboratory Service: <https://www.nhls.ac.za>
- COVID-19 Online Resource & News Portal: www.sacoronavirus.co.za
- NICD Toll-Free Emergency Hotline for COVID-19: 0800 029 999
- WhatsApp Support Line for COVID-19: Send HI to 0600 123 45
- COVID-19 Online Resource & News Portal: www.sacoronavirus.co.za
- NICD Toll-Free Emergency Hotline for COVID-19: 0800 029 999
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