



**GRACE PRIMARY SCHOOL POLICY
DOCUMENT FOR COVID-19
GUIDELINES IN PREPARATION FOR
SCHOOL REOPENING**

MAY 2020

CONTENTS

	Page No.
1. Preamble	3
2. The Spread of Covid-19 in the workplace	4
3. Appointment of Compliance Officer	
4. Workplace Plan	5
4.1 Starting Date and Opening Hours	
4.2 Dates for Proposed phased return to school	
4.3 Guidance for cleaning staff	
5. Required knowledge of Safety Measures before Reopening of school	6
5.1 Before School	
5.2 To and from School	
5.3 At School	
6. Procedures regarding returning staff	7
7. Procedures if a Staff Member or Student presents Typical Covid-19 Symptoms	8
7.1 Response if a staff member of student presents symptoms	
7.2 Return to work after testing positive for Covid-19	
8. List of Employees (including those with conditions which require them to work from home)	9
9. Arrangements for Visitors	10
10. Conclusion	

Annexure A: Principal's Declaration Form

Annexure B: Permit for Returning Staff

Annexure C: Employee Declaration Form

Annexure D: Covid-19 Compliance Officer Appointment

Annexure E: Visitor Travel History Report

Annexure F: Visitor Screening Register

Annexure G: PPE Issuing Register

Annexure H: Minutes of Information Meeting

Annexure I: Student Indemnity Form

GRACE PRIMARY SCHOOL POLICY DOCUMENT ON RETURN TO SCHOOL AFTER COVID-19

1. PREAMBLE

Just as the public service has the legal obligation in accordance with Section 8, of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) 1993, as amended to, where reasonably practicable, provide and maintain a safe, healthy work environment that is without risk to employees, so this obligation extends to the private sector.

Regulation 53 provides that the Principal shall establish and maintain a safe and healthy work environment for employees and service providers of the school and a safe and healthy service delivery environment for its staff, parents and pupils.

- 1.1 The workplace will be arranged in such a manner to ensure that staff and students are at least one and a half meters apart, or place physical barriers between them to prevent possible transmission of COVID-19 where the former is not possible;
- 1.2 No staff or students who display symptoms of COVID-19 will be permitted on the school campus;
- 1.3 Should a staff member or student display symptoms of COVID-19, the school will contact the NICD, COVID-19 hotline on 0800 02 9999 and instruct employees to act in accordance with the communicated instructions;
- 1.4 The school will provide staff with 2 cloth masks and a face screen (See APPENDIX G) or require an employee to wear some form of cloth mask which covers their mouth and nose while at work;
- 1.5 The school will provide all staff with hand sanitiser, soap and clean water and ensure employees practice appropriate hygiene in the workplace by washing their hands and cleaning / disinfecting their classrooms and each workstation
- 1.6 The staff must ensure that their workplaces are cleaned and disinfected twice a day - at breaktime and end of school.
- 1.7 An infra red lamp will be operated for 2 hours each day to heat all exposed surfaces during winter months.

2. THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 IN THE WORKPLACE

It is mandatory that all staff familiarise themselves with how COVID-19 is spread in the workplace. (see Minutes of Covid-19 Information Meeting (**See APPENDIX H**))

- 2.1 When someone is infected with COVID-19 coughs or exhales, they release droplets of infected fluid.
- 2.2 Most of these droplets fall on nearby surfaces and objects - such as desks, tables or telephones.
- 2.3 People are infected with COVID-19 by touching contaminated surfaces or objects – and then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.
- 2.4 If people are standing within one meter of a person with COVID-19 they can be infected by breathing in droplets coughed out or exhaled by them. In other words, COVID-19 spreads in a similar way to the flu.
- 2.5 Most persons infected with COVID-19 experience mild symptoms and recover.
- 2.6 Some experience more severe symptoms and may require hospitalisation.

Schools will therefore need to ensure that they apply strict health and safety protocols to ensure that the school remains open once a return to school has been approved by the government. This will include regular feedback sessions as well as school signage to remind staff, students, parents and visitors of the basic protocols required to limit the risk of contracting COVID-19.

Grace Primary School has appointed a special COVID-19 Health and Safety officer at the school. If any COVID-19 cases arise once school is back in session, this will be reported to NICD and the affected group of students and staff will be required to go into self-isolation immediately and all primary contacts will be required to do the same. The affected venues will be out of bounds until a deep clean has been implemented. The procedures below are therefore essential and the commitment from both staff and pupils will be pivotal to ensure that we eliminate risk as far as possible.

3. APPOINTMENT OF COMPLIANCE OFFICER

Grace Primary School has appointed **Mrs Karen Wood**, the school's Principal, as the COVID-19 Compliance Officer. She will be required to oversee the implementation of the Workplace Plan and adherence to the standards of hygiene and health protocols relating to COVID-19 at the workplace. (See **APPENDIX D**)

4. WORKPLACE PLAN TO PREPARE SCHOOL PRIOR TO A RETURN OF ALL STAFF & STUDENTS

4.1 Starting date and operating hours of Grace Primary School

Start of **Term 3**: 2 July 2020

There will be staggered drop off and collection times for students:

Drop off hour: 7.30 - 8.30

School finish times: 12.30 (G1,2) 13.00 (G3,4) 13.30 (G5,6,7)

Collection time: 13.00-14.00

Break times will also be staggered.

4.2 Dates for the proposed phased return to school

Unless there is a further directive from the DBE, provisional dates for the phased-in return of Grace Primary School staff and students to school will include:

Category of Staff	Date of Return
Cleaning Staff, Principal & Admin	During school holidays
All Staff	29 June 2020
Students	02 July 2020

4.3 Guidance for Cleaning Staff

Cleaning staff will be responsible for cleaning and disinfecting the classrooms, offices, bathrooms and communal venues prior to the return of teachers and students. In addition, sanitizing dispensers will be available in each classroom, bathroom and shared area.

Cleaning staff should, on a weekly basis, use diluted bleach to wipe down the desks and work surfaces

Each classroom will be equipped with a roll of paper towels and a 500ml disinfectant bottle with spray nozzle to clean surfaces. Teachers will be required to use paper towels and disinfectant to clean the desks and work surfaces twice a day.

Cleaning staff will be required to wear masks and gloves and will be briefed on the dangers of cross contamination between venues.

Routine cleaning and disinfecting are key to maintaining a safe environment for pupils and staff.

- **Cleaning** removes dirt and most germs and is usually done with soap and water.
- **Disinfecting** kills most germs, depending on the type of chemical, and only when the chemical product is used as directed on the label.

Routine cleaning and disinfecting procedures

Each venue should be cleaned and disinfected at least daily, as well as frequently touched surfaces and objects such as:

- Doorknobs and handles
- Classroom desks and chairs
- Internal lockers/pigeonholes in classrooms
- Staffroom tables and chairs
- Countertops
- Light switches
- Equipment (e.g. projectors, remotes, dusters, board pens, computers and keyboards)
- external tables and benches

5. REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE AND SAFETY MEASURES FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF PRIOR TO SCHOOL OPENING

We acknowledge three major focal points of transmission when presenting hygiene and physical distancing measures

5.1 Before school (Personal Responsibility)

- We note that school administrators and teachers are not solely responsible for ensuring adequate hygiene and physical distancing measures, but that caregivers and students and staff also have personal responsibilities to contribute to the reduction in overall community transmission.
- Caregivers do a 'physical check-in' (Temperature and symptom check) on their children on a daily basis before school to assess for any symptoms of any illness – should not send the student to school if ill with *any* symptoms including fever, cough, sore throat, redness of eyes or shortness of breath (or difficulty in breathing), loss of taste/smell, diarrhea or vomiting
- Staff to do a 'physical check-in' on themselves on a daily basis before school to assess for any symptoms of any illness – should not attend school if ill with any symptoms.
- If child or caregiver or staff is diagnosed with COVID-19, to alert school to allow for contact tracing, and to follow national guidance for self-isolation
- If the child or caregiver or staff member has been in contact with an individual with a suspected case of confirmed COVID-19 infection, to inform school and to follow national guidance for self-quarantine

5.2 To and from school

a. Hygiene

- *Personal responsibility*

Caregivers to provide clean cloth mask for public transport

- *School responsibility*
 - Schools to promote appropriate hygiene measures (sanitizing, cough etiquette) during travel to and from school for all learners and staff
 - Provision of hand-washing or hand sanitization points at sites of drop-off and collection
 - Provision of reserve stock of emergency clean cloth masks for learners arriving without masks, or damaged, inappropriate masks etc.

b. Physical distancing

- *Personal responsibility*

Caregivers to select appropriate transport choices for students aligned with regulations.

See CPHM guidance on public transport regarding adequate ventilation, sanitization and reduced capacity in public transport conveyances (taxi)

https://www.cmsa.co.za/view_news_item.aspx?NewsID=149

5.3 At school

All staff and students must be appraised of the following prior to returning to school and must ensure that they adhere to this protocol for the foreseeable future:

- a) Requirement of physical distance between pupils and staff according to the regulations of “social distancing” at all times during the school day and reiterate that 1.5 meters is the school requirement.
- b) Arranging all work spaces with single desks at least a metre apart
- c) Minimising the number of people that are permitted to enter or leave school at any one time (staggered arrival and departure times)
- d) The requirement to sanitize hands at entry into the school
- e) The use of sanitiser upon entering classrooms/venues during the school day
- f) The requirement to check the temperature of every person entering the school with the use of a thermal thermometer and to do this at random intervals during the school day if necessary
- g) Ongoing reasonable level of cleaning of the school on an ongoing basis
- h) Any person feeling ill must not attend the school until the nature of the illness is clarified
- i) Ongoing training of everyone on general hygiene requirements such as cleanliness, how to cough and sneeze and how to correctly wash hands
- j) No playing on the jungle gym or with Sports equipment at break time
- k) A separate space in the school should there be any doubt and the need for someone presenting as ill to then be quarantined while awaiting transportation from the school. Barriers, screens, hygiene and distancing measures to be strictly adhered to in this room.

On an ongoing basis, **students, teachers, support staff, parents and communities** should do the following:

- Heed the directives by the President and the guidance provided by the Ministry of Health;
- Avoid public gatherings of over 50 people (assembly, break time, lining up etc) as the disease is spread through direct contact with respiratory droplets of an infected person which are generated through coughing and sneezing;
- Avoid shaking hands, hugs and direct contact; A social/physical distance of at least 1.5 meters must be maintained between all persons

- When coughing and sneezing, nose and mouth must be covered with a flexed elbow or tissue. The tissue must be disposed of thereafter.
- Wash hands frequently with water and soap. Where water is not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser to disinfect hands;
Additional handwashing with soap and running water is required:
 - a. After going to the bathroom
 - b. Before and after eating
 - c. Before, during and after preparing food
 - d. After blowing your nose
 - e. Coughing or sneezing
 - f. When caring for the sick
 - g. When hands are visibly dirty
 - i. After handling worksheets / books.
- Minimise touching the face (i.e. eyes, nose, mouth) with your hands. The COVID-19 virus may survive on surfaces for several hours. However, simple cleaning of surfaces with disinfectants can kill the virus.
- The wearing of masks or protective visors by all people on the school grounds at all times
- Consult a healthcare facility if you suspect an infection of COVID-19;
- Any suspected cases must be reported to the national hotline - 0800 029 999. If a school child is involved, please also report it to the WCED so that we can make a decision on the appropriate action.
- Inform the Education and Health Department authorities immediately if a student, educator, support staff or parent/caregiver has been in direct contact with an infected person, or if they are diagnosed with COVID-19; and
- Eradicate all forms of stigma and discrimination in the education sector including in schools and childcare facilities.

6. PROCEDURES REGARDING RETURNING STAFF

- All staff will sign a declaration of health on initial return to school and thereafter are required to take their temperature each day before leaving home, and confirm health status via WhatsApp to the Principal each morning.
- Ground and Cleaning staff must enter through the Pedestrian gate and be screened by the School Administrator to ascertain whether they have any of the observable symptoms associated with COVID-19, namely fever, cough, sore throat, redness of eyes or shortness of breath (or difficulty in breathing). She will make use of a thermal thermometer and if the employee's temperature exceeds 38 degrees instruct the staff member to wait for 15 minutes in the quarantine space. If the temperature remains elevated, she will instruct them to return home and remain there until she/he has no temperature. (All the above must be recorded by the screener on a checklist that will be provided). The staff member may only return to school when she/he has a medical clearance certificate from a doctor stating that she/he does not have Covid-19, or that she/he is fully recovered and cleared if she/he has tested positive.
- Academic Staff will be required to sanitise their hands at regular intervals and to clean and disinfect classrooms twice a day.

- ALL Staff are to wear masks at all times. The School will provide each staff member with two masks and a perspex face shield. Masks should be washed and ironed each evening.

7. PROCEDURES IF A STAFF MEMBER OR STUDENT PRESENTS TYPICAL COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

7.1 Responding to a person with positive results

In terms of the Occupational Health and Safety Direction of 28 April 2020 (**OHS Direction**), if an employee tests positive for COVID-19, or displays symptoms associated with COVID-19 or advises the employer that he or she has such symptoms:

- a) The employee must not be permitted to enter the school or report for work
- b) if the staff member or student is already at school, she/he will be immediately isolated, provided with a mask, and required to go for a medical examination, for testing or to be self-isolated;
- c) if the staff member or student does not need hospital admission, she/he will be sent home, and is required to self-isolate at home if appropriate;
- d) the school will immediately assess the risk of transmission and if appropriate, will temporarily close to disinfect the classroom or area;
- e) the school will refer other staff members or students who may also be at risk for symptom screening;
- f) remote teaching will be permitted should the teacher feel better but still be required to self isolate.
- g) the School will ensure that the employee or pupil is not discriminated against on grounds of having tested positive for COVID-19.

- h) the affected employee will receive leave benefits as follows:

Sick leave

The employee must be placed on ordinary paid sick leave in terms of section 22 of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997 (**BCEA**) or in terms of any more beneficial sick leave entitlement in terms of the employee's contract of employment.

The ordinary statutory requirements applicable to proof of incapacity in terms of section 23 of the BCEA apply, in that, the employer is not required to pay the employee if the employee is absent from work for more than two consecutive days unless the employee provides a medical certificate stating that the employee was unfit for work on those days.

Illness benefit

The OHS Direction provides that if the employee's sick leave entitlement is exhausted, an employer must make an application for an illness benefit in terms of Unemployment Insurance Act (**UIA**), read with the Directive by the Minister of Employment and Labour, as amended.

The illness benefit is applicable to employees who agree to go into precautionary quarantine for a period of 14 days due to COVID-19. Quarantine serves to separate a symptomatic individual potentially exposed to a disease from unexposed individuals in such a manner so as to prevent the possible spread of infection or contamination.

Confirmation from the employer and the employee must be submitted to the UIF as proof that the employee was in agreed precautionary self-quarantine for 14 days.

Should the employee be quarantined for more than 14 days, a medical certificate from a medical practitioner must be submitted to the UIF together with a continuation form for payment.

Special leave

In circumstances where an employee is listed as being in close contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, but does not present symptoms, sick leave and the illness benefit will not be applicable. Ideally, the employee should be required to work from home in order to maintain a healthy and safe working environment. In the event that the employee's duties cannot be performed remotely, the employer should consider granting special leave (paid leave over and above an employee's ordinary entitlements to leave).

Granting special leave will be in compliance with the notice published by the Compensation Commissioner in terms of the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act 130 of 1993, in respect of 'Occupationally acquired COVID-19', which records that for suspected and unconfirmed cases of COVID-19 and for self-quarantine recommended by a registered medical practitioner, the employer will be liable for remuneration for the days of absence.

7.2 Returning to work after testing positive for COVID-19

If a staff member or student has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and isolated in accordance with the Department of Health Guidelines, the staff member may only return to work if:

- a) The staff member or student has undergone a medical examination confirming that s/he has been tested negative for COVID-19 after at least 14 days isolation;
- b) the staff member or student wears suitable 3 layer mask at all times for the remaining period of 21 days from the date of initial testing;
- c) the employer ensures that the staff member or student adheres to social distancing, hygiene and cough etiquette; and

- d) the employer closely monitors the staff member or student for symptoms on return to school.

8. LIST OF EMPLOYEES

Below is a list of employees that have been given permission to work from home due to: health conditions or comorbidities.

NAME OF EMPLOYEE	REASON FOR WORKING ONLINE AT HOME

9. ARRANGEMENTS FOR VISITORS

- No physical contact is allowed between employees or between staff members and visitors (inclusive of parents, suppliers, contractors, etc).
- Visitors should sanitise their hands upon entering the employer’s workplace with alcohol-based hand sanitiser (with an alcohol content of at least 40%).
- Visitors must wear face masks or other facial protective equipment when entering the premises and are not allowed to take it off whilst on the premises.
- Visitors must practice social distancing of at least one-and-a-half metres away from any staff members or other visitors in all circumstances.
- Any visitor to the workplace must complete the attached travel history report (**See ANNEXURE E**) that will be kept on record for a period of 12 months.
- Visitors shall be screened for any symptoms associated with COVID-19 at the Pedestrian Gate and will not be permitted in the workplace if any such symptoms are displayed. (These visitor names will be recorded on a visitor screening register (**See ANNEXURE F**).
- Visitors will also be required to indicate whether or not they are suffering from the following additional symptoms, namely, body aches, loss of smell or loss of taste, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, weakness or tiredness and, if this is the case, they will not be permitted in the workplace.

10. CONCLUSION

The Head will complete a CEO declaration form (**See ANNEXURE A**) confirming that the necessary risk assessment has been completed and that the school is compliant with applicable regulations and directives to allow for the return of staff and pupils to the school.

All staff who are permitted to return to work will be provided with a Permit (**See ANNEXURE B**), which is to be kept on their person at all times so that it can be shown to the necessary authorities, should it be requested.

ALL employees will also be requested to complete an employee declaration and information form (**See ANNEXURE C**) on their return to work.

Finally, this document will be placed on the school's website and parent(s)/guardian(s) will be required to confirm that they understand and will comply with procedures herein, on behalf of himself/herself/themselves and his/her/their son(s) and daughter(s).