

PUNJAB PROVINCE

Guide for the Safe Re-opening of Schools



Punjab Guide for Safe Re-opening of Schools

July 2020

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Messages

Executive Statement of Dr. Murad Raas, Minister School Education Punjab



As per the vision of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, safety measures have to be taken in order to ensure that life returns to normalcy. The guidelines in this document have been developed with multiple consultations with all relevant stakeholders and aim to incorporate the international best-practices for safe re-opening of schools with the SOPs defined by National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) and Ministry of National Health Services Regulations and Coordination (NHSRC). The objective is to train the children, parents, and teachers on these SOPs. God willing, this will pave the way for our children to safely come back to school.

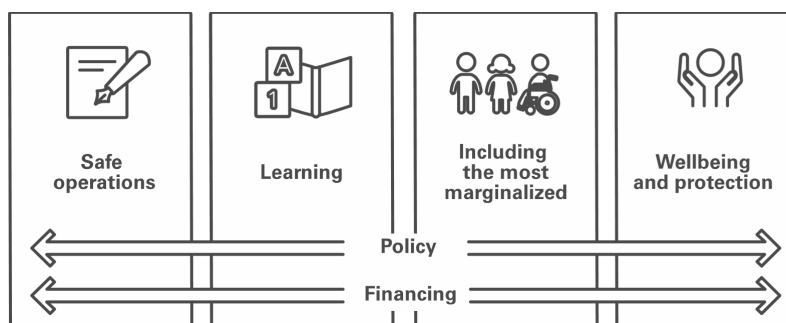
Statement of Ghulam Farid, Secretary School Education Punjab



The repeated closure of schools has thrown the education cycle of children across the Punjab into disarray. This guidebook will ensure that parents have peace of mind, when sending their children to school, and teachers will have the comfort of teaching in a safe and secure environment. The safety of our children is our utmost priority and we hope that, gradually, it will become the culture of the society to discharge its duties with safety and responsibility.

Executive Summary

This guide is based on the Pakistan National Education Response and Resilience Plan for COVID-19 and seeks to provide policy makers with framework for the safe reopening of schools in Punjab Province. The guidance included herein is in line with the “Global Framework on Reopening Schools” issued by UNESCO, UNICEF, The World Bank Group, and the World Food Programme in April 2020. The Global Framework outlines six dimensions for education authorities to consider when deciding on their readiness to reopen schools: safe operations, learning, including the most marginalized and the wellbeing and protection of the school community. Adapting policy and securing the needed financial resources are the additional two dimensions that support implementation and achievement of the other dimensions.



The focus of this guide is “safe operations” though, by necessity, the guidance included here touches on all the dimensions and applies equally to the students, teachers and staff of School Education (SED), Special Education (SpEd) and Literacy an Non-Formal Basis Education Department (L&NFBEd). A separate national Continuity of Learning Framework for Pakistan will complement this guide with its focus on learning, including for the most marginalized and with methods to promote the wellbeing and protection of children. This guide takes as its starting point the following principles for the safe reopening of schools.

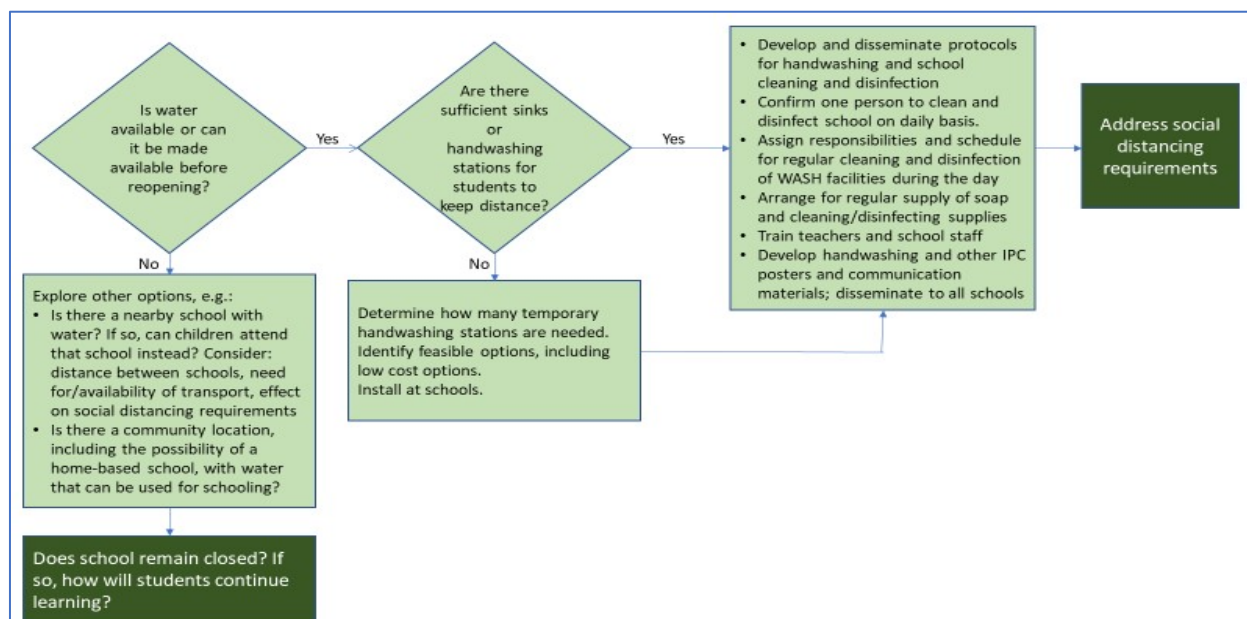
Principles for safe reopening of schools

The timing of school reopening should be:

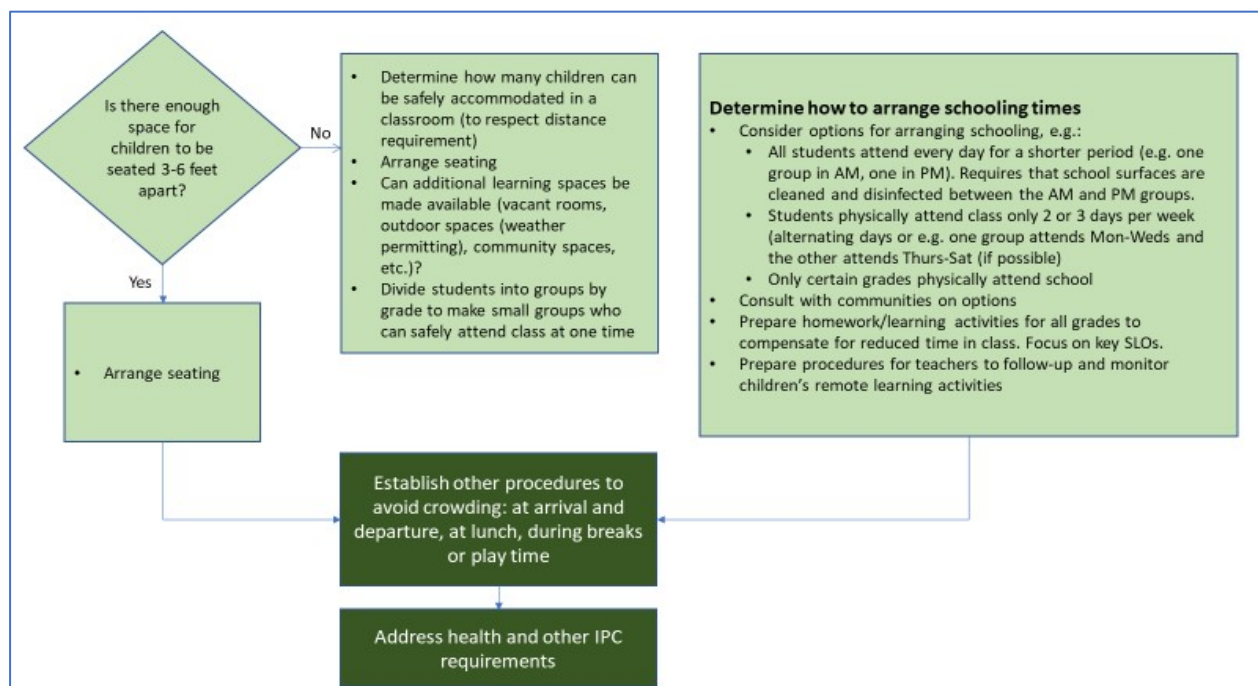
- Guided by the best interest of the child and overall public health considerations
- Based on an assessment of the associated benefits and risks of reopening, including risks to health and safety as well as loss of learning and the longer-term impacts of school closures, especially on the most marginalized children
- Made in consultation with multiple stakeholders, including provincial and district authorities (education, health and local government), teachers, parents and children and partners through participatory processes

Based on what is currently known about COVID-19 and the most effective means of infection prevention and control (IPC), this guide begins with a discussion of three key aspects of IPC:

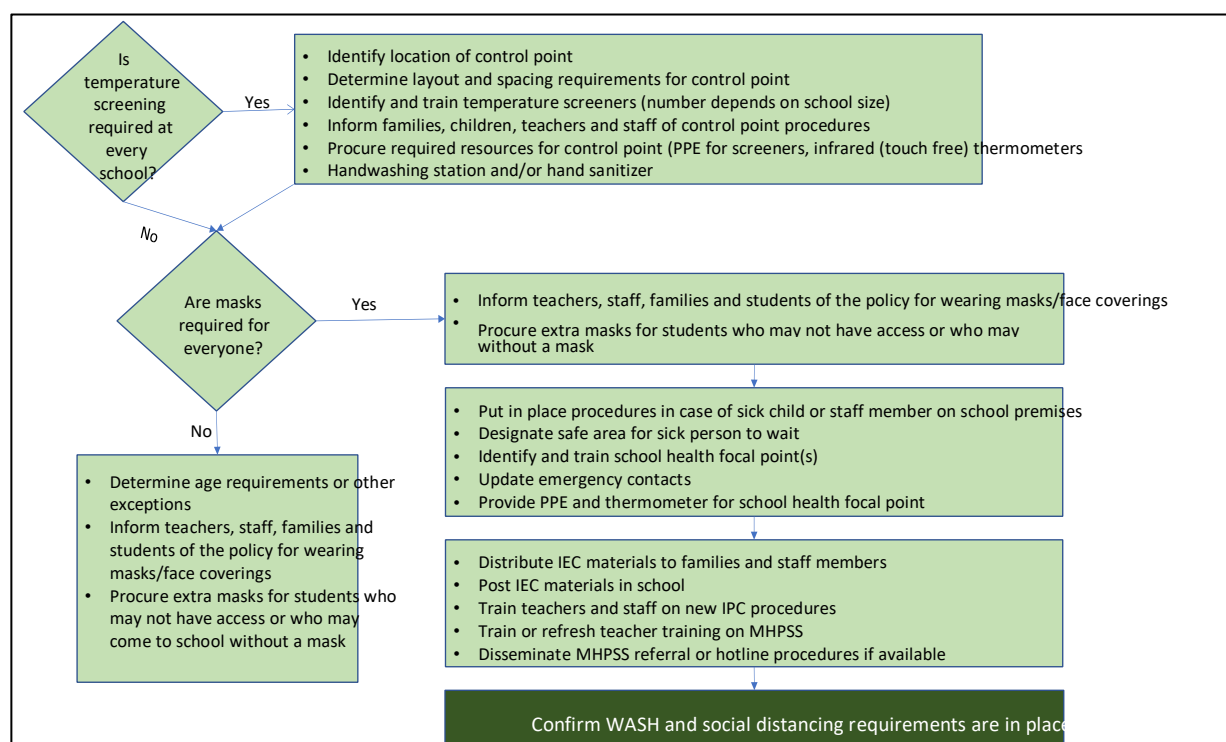
1. **WASH:** One of the main prevention methods for COVID-19 is proper hygiene, cleaning, and disinfection. As such, availability of water along with protocols for handwashing and cleaning and disinfection of schools are discussed. Key considerations for decisionmakers are included in the flowchart below.



2. **Social distancing:** COVID-19 is a highly contagious coronavirus that is spread through respiratory droplets (produced by coughing, sneezing, singing and even talking). One way to prevent infection is to maintain physical distance between people. The Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Health Services social distancing guidelines call for a distance of six feet to be maintained. This will be a significant challenge in the many crowded schools in Punjab province, ranging from one or two classroom schools to large schools of more than 500 students. The challenge may equally apply in crowded Non-Formal Education (NFE) centres. Key considerations for decisionmakers with relation to social distancing are included in the flowchart below.



3. **School health and other infection prevention and control:** Much of infection prevention and control for COVID-19 is accomplished through social distancing and provision of sufficient WASH facilities and supplies. Additional measures such as wearing facemasks have also been found critical in terms of stopping the spread of the coronavirus. Policies will be needed for the use of masks and whether to screen all students and staff at the beginning of the school day to check for fever or other obvious symptoms associated with COVID-19. Clear messages must be communicated to staff, students and parents not to come to school when ill. Schools must also be prepared and know what to do if someone becomes ill during the day. These types of issues are discussed in this section. Key considerations for decisionmakers with relation to school health and other IPC are included in the flowchart below.



Annex 1 includes several detailed SOP templates that address the WASH, Social Distancing and School Health and other IPC considerations put forward in this document. The intent is for SED, L&NFBED and SpED to use or modify the SOPs as relevant to their context and decisions taken in Punjab.

The final two sections of this guide put forward a series of issues for education authorities to consider within the full scope of the Global Framework on Reopening Schools.

4. **Teaching and learning and wellbeing:** As indicated, a separate Continuity of Learning Framework will serve as the main reference for decision making and preparations related to learning. This guide also puts forward several policy-related questions for decisionmakers to consider, including:

- What is the plan to ensure that all children, including the most marginalized or at risk, return to school or have opportunities to continue learning?
- Which parts of the curriculum will be prioritized once children are back at school, as all parts will not be able to be covered? How will students be able to learn the content missed during the school closure period? What additional review and remediation will be needed?

- **Will a flexible operational/academic calendar and formative assessment system be developed in case of renewed COVID-19 outbreaks?**
- What training or support is needed for teachers before schools reopen, e.g. psychosocial, how to adjust lesson plans to make up for the lost learning time, how to prepare for blended or remote learning activities? How will this training be delivered?
- What support is available for the teachers and education personnel to meet the psychosocial and protection needs of the children to manage their health and wellbeing?
- What referral mechanism are in place for children's protection and health concerns in schools, ensuring gender sensitivity, age appropriateness and inclusiveness adjusted for COVID-19 context?
- What distance learning arrangements will be developed for children who do not return to school due to illness or because they (or a family member) are at high risk of COVID-19?
- What is the longer-term strategy for ensuring continuation of learning?

5. **System Strengthening and Financial Preparedness:** Finally, the last section of the guide considers various aspects of how the system can be strengthened while responding to the COVID-19 crisis. The fast-changing nature of this crisis will require flexible, adaptable leadership – able to respond quickly to protect the health and safety of the school community while also seeking ways to continue learning for all children in Punjab Province. Doing this will require adaptation of policies and systems to better respond to the COVID-19 crisis. Decisions and actions required based on the issues set forward in this guide will also require financial preparedness, from considerations of how to reallocate existing education budgets to exploring options for increased financing to help secure the resources needed to keep children and staff safe and mitigate the risk of infection once schools reopen. Key policy-related questions for decisionmakers to consider include:

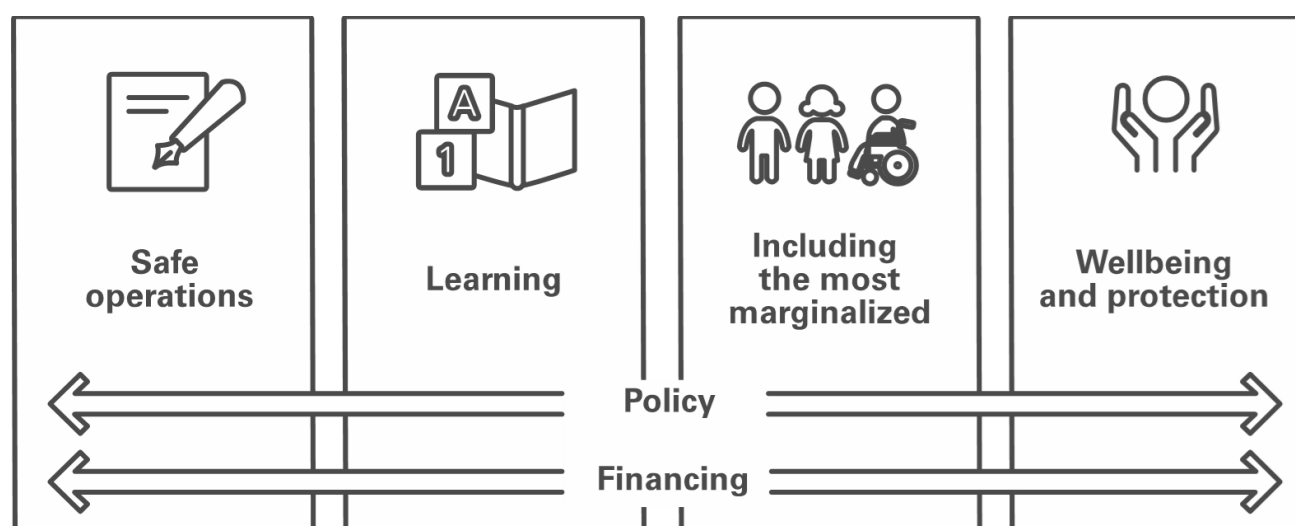
- What provincial policies, plans and SOPs need to be designed and implemented for the safe reopening of schools and continuation of learning?
- What arrangements can schools use for recruiting additional teachers (or assistants) if needed because of COVID-19?
- What are the cost and financing implications associated with reopening schools and preparing for ongoing continuation of learning?
- What special monitoring and data collection activities are needed as a result of COVID-19?

Punjab Guide for the Safe Re-opening of Schools

Introduction

The outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has caused a severe disruption to teaching and learning in Punjab province. The Government has launched the Taleem Ghar/tele-school programme as a means of continuing learning, but the majority of children do not have access to even television much less internet. It is still unknown how long schools will be closed, but there is an urgent need for all educators to get ready to reopen schools safely – to review prior learning and remediate lost learning, to avoid children dropping out and to promote the psychosocial health and wellbeing of children. Preparing to reopen schools is a matter of safety and health as described in the first three sections of this guide. Critically it also requires preparations to enhance learning. It is likely that nearly all children will have achieved very little learning during the school closure period, which means a potential loss of instruction of at least 3-4 months. A well thought-through remediation programme will be needed to compensate for the learning losses of this academic year and to avoid further losses in learning in the coming academic years.

This guide is based on the Pakistan National Education Response and Resilience Plan for COVID-19 and provides a framework for the safe reopening of all schools and learning institutions in Punjab Province, including those operated by SED, SpEd. and L&NFBE. This guidance also follows that of the “Global Framework on Reopening Schools” issued by UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank Group and the World Food Programme. The Global Framework outlines six dimensions for education authorities to consider when deciding on their readiness to reopen schools: safe operations, learning, including the most marginalized and the wellbeing and protection of the school community. Adapting policy and securing the needed financial resources will be needed to support each of the dimensions.



This guide sets out decision making processes that educational leaders in the province, districts and schools will need to consider supporting students returning to school safely. The guide also outlines contextually relevant Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) which can be modified and adapted based on the specific needs of the province. In line with the Global Framework, the guide puts forward actions to take before reopening as well as procedures to follow as part of the reopening process and once schools are reopened.

Principles for safe reopening of schools

The timing of school reopening should be:

- Guided by the best interest of the child and overall public health considerations
- Based on an assessment of the associated benefits and risks of reopening, including risks to health and safety as well as loss of learning and the longer-term impacts of school closures, especially on the most marginalized children
- Made in consultation with multiple stakeholders, including provincial and district authorities (education, health and local government), teachers, parents and children and partners through participatory processes

Challenges for safe school reopening in Punjab

Education authorities face several key challenges with regard to safely reopening schools during the time of COVID-19. These are:

- **Lack of resources to ensure hygiene in schools, including water availability for some schools, additional handwashing stations, cleaning and disinfection supplies and additional sweepers so schools can meet cleaning and disinfection requirements.**
- **In most schools, it will not be possible to implement social distancing guidelines if all children return to school at the same time.**
- **If a large number of teachers do not return to school because they are at high risk to COVID-19 (due to either age or pre-existing health condition), crowding will become even more of a challenge.**
- **It is assumed that most schools do not have the required health and infection prevention and control procedures and resources needed at this time.**
- **Limited options for blended and distance learning currently exist; these will need to be further developed and implementation challenges – for both teachers and students – addressed. Special needs learners may be even further disadvantaged unless alternative learning arrangements are put in place for them.**
- **Remediation materials and processes have not been developed and teachers are not aware/trained to carry out multiple teaching options**

Addressing these challenges will require action at all levels of the system – from provincial and district authorities to teachers, school councils, parents, children and community members. As more is learned about COVID-19, education officials around the world are confronting a situation that has never been seen before. Responding to the COVID-19 crisis will require flexible and adaptable leadership that can react quickly to changes in the situation, including with updates to SOPs and guidelines as more information about COVID-19 becomes known. Reopening schools will require a number of decisions by provincial authorities, including:

- **When will schools reopen?**
 - The date for reopening schools will be determined at the provincial level based on the decision of all relevant authorities. Provincial leaders will have to consider the current status of COVID-19 in the province and its districts (infection rates, positive cases, ability of hospitals and the health care system to deal with patients) when making their decision. Health officials will provide critical information throughout the process.

- Before schools reopen in Punjab province, the current plan is for a detailed and thorough check of each area for the intensity of the virus. In case a particular area is found to be in the high virus zone, or has insufficient facilities available, it will not be opened until it meets the guidelines. Students from schools in the affected area may alternatively be enrolled in other nearby schools if those schools meet the criteria for reopening.
- Ultimately the decision to reopen schools is a risk management one. On the one hand, school closures help reduce the risk of infection in the community. On the other hand, children seem to be at lower risk to this particular coronavirus. **School closures, however, pose other substantial risks for children including:**
 - **Short- and long-term losses in learning:** recent research indicates that children who missed 14 weeks of school following the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan were the equivalent of 1.5 years behind in learning four years later¹
 - **Increased dropouts**
 - **Increased psychosocial issues or damage to children's social wellbeing**
 - **Lack of social supports** in some cases, especially as schools should be safe places for children and may also provide additional support such as school feeding
 - **Decreased family income or increased poverty** if parents cannot work because children are not in school
- COVID-19 will be present for some time. Therefore, education officials will ultimately need to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 infection among children, teachers, staff and parents by putting measures in place, such as frequent handwashing, cleaning and disinfecting procedures; health screenings; mandating masks etc. At the same time, they must be prepared and put in place measures to mitigate further losses in learning that may result from decreased classroom time, stress, anxiety and trauma or temporary reclosures of schools.
- **How will schools reopen?**
 - Based primarily on decisions about social distancing requirements and in consultation with health officials, provincial leaders may decide to reopen:
 - All schools at the same time
 - Only schools in some districts
 - Schooling for students in only some grades
 - Or some combination
- **What are the minimum infection prevention and control procedures and resources required for reopening?**
 - What additional hygiene resources are needed (number of handwashing stations, required supplies, etc.)?
 - What social distancing requirements must be met in classrooms?
 - Are temperature screening/symptom checks required before entering a school?
 - Will all students, teachers and staff be required to wear masks?

¹ Andrabi, T., Daniels, B., and Das, J. (2020) Human Capital Accumulation and Disasters: Evidence from the Pakistan Earthquake of 2005. *RISE Working Paper Series*. 20/039. https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP_2020/039.

- **What training is required for Education managers, teachers and school staff to:**
 - Make sure schools operate safely once reopened?
 - Implement remediation activities and assess students' progress? ○ Implement blended or distance learning activities?
 - Support students' physical and emotional wellbeing?
- **What arrangements are required for continuation of learning if:**
 - School hours are shorter?
 - Schools must re-close.
- **What arrangements will be made to support health and wellbeing of teachers who are at high risk from COVID-19?**
 - Teachers at high risk can support distance learning activities rather than returning to school
 - Temporary teachers can be employed to lower or maintain student-teacher ratios
- **What arrangements will be made for the health, wellbeing and learning needs of students who are at high risk from COVID-19 or for special needs learners whose schools remain closed?**
 - providing a distance learning option including provision of necessary devices and teacher support

These key policy questions will need to be discussed and agreed so that provincial authorities can finalize SOPs for schools and communicate decisions for safe school reopening. Each question should also be evaluated using an equity criteria, will any particular group – girls, children with disabilities, children from economically disadvantaged households, female teachers – be further disadvantaged or face proportionally greater challenges in relation to school reopening and continuation of learning? If so, what steps can be taken to ameliorate these additional challenges?

The following sections consider what is needed to make such decisions.

1. WASH in schools

Key WASH questions for provincial authorities

- **What options will be pursued for schools that do not have water available?**
- **What type and supply of cleaning and sanitation supplies must be available at every school? How will these be purchased and supplied to schools?**
- **Where and how many handwashing stations are required at each school?**
- **How much will it cost to put in handwashing facilities? What sources of funding are available?**

In Punjab, there are a total of 52,441 schools, including 302 institutions managed by the Special Education Department (NEMIS 2016-17). Of those, **only 265 did not have access to water in 2016/17. As of 2020, only 68 of the SED schools did not have toilets for students. The vast majority of schools with inadequate WASH**

facilities are primary schools. (See Table 1.) Providing an adequate water supply is one of the key methods of infection prevention for COVID-19, which necessitates making sure that water is available at every school that is reopened.

Table 1. Number of schools with water and toilets, by type of school

	Primary			Middle			Secondary			
Schools with:	M	F	Mixed	M	F	Mixed	M	F	Mixed	Total
Water*										
Yes	5,426	3,083	28,235	2,123	1,734	4,502	3,240	1,800	2,033	52,176
No/not reported	22	41	183	1	1	7	1	4	5	265
Toilets**										
Yes	15,008	17,021		3,555	4,789		3,879	3,661		47,913
No/not reported	48	16		1	0		2	1		68

*Source: NEMIS 2016-17; **SED schools only from Punjab EMIS, 2020.

In addition to water, all schools should have:

- Soap for handwashing
- Cleaning and disinfecting supplies for school facilities (bucket, mop, disinfecting solution, personal protective equipment (PPE, e.g. face masks, gloves) for sweepers)
- Waste disposal bins (with a cover and a safe place for disposal of rubbish)
- Sinks or handwashing stations - additional temporary handwashing stations may be needed if there are insufficient sinks/handwashing stations to avoid crowding.

The status of handwashing spots and soap as of February 2020 in SED schools is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Number of handwashing spots and soaps at SED schools.

Level	Female			Male			Total		
	Handwashing spots	Soaps	%	Handwashing spots	Soaps	%	Handwashing spots	Soaps	%
H.Sec.	3,305	3,069	93	2,593	2,316	89	5,898	5,385	91
High	16,679	15,450	93	15,543	14,323	92	32,222	29,773	92
Middle	15,020	14,135	94	10,687	9,907	93	25,707	24,042	94
Primary	34,557	32,233	93	28,410	26,524	93	62,967	58,757	93
Grand Total	69,561	64,887	93	57,233	53,070	93	126,794	117,957	93

Source: SED monthly monitoring report, February 2020.

Determine the number of handwashing stations required

- Place handwashing stations at least one metre (ideally two) apart to maintain physical distance between students while washing their hands.

- Install handwashing stations in key locations of the school, for example entrance, next to the toilets, main buildings, playground.
- Consider additional handwashing stations in larger schools (more than 500 students) in the province. For example, one in each classroom as well as in corridors and entrances/exits to the school. At a minimum, it is recommended that there is one handwashing station for every 50 students or at least five per school.
- Materials for low cost temporary handwashing stations can be purchased locally and assembled by the community or SMC.

What if a school does not currently have water?

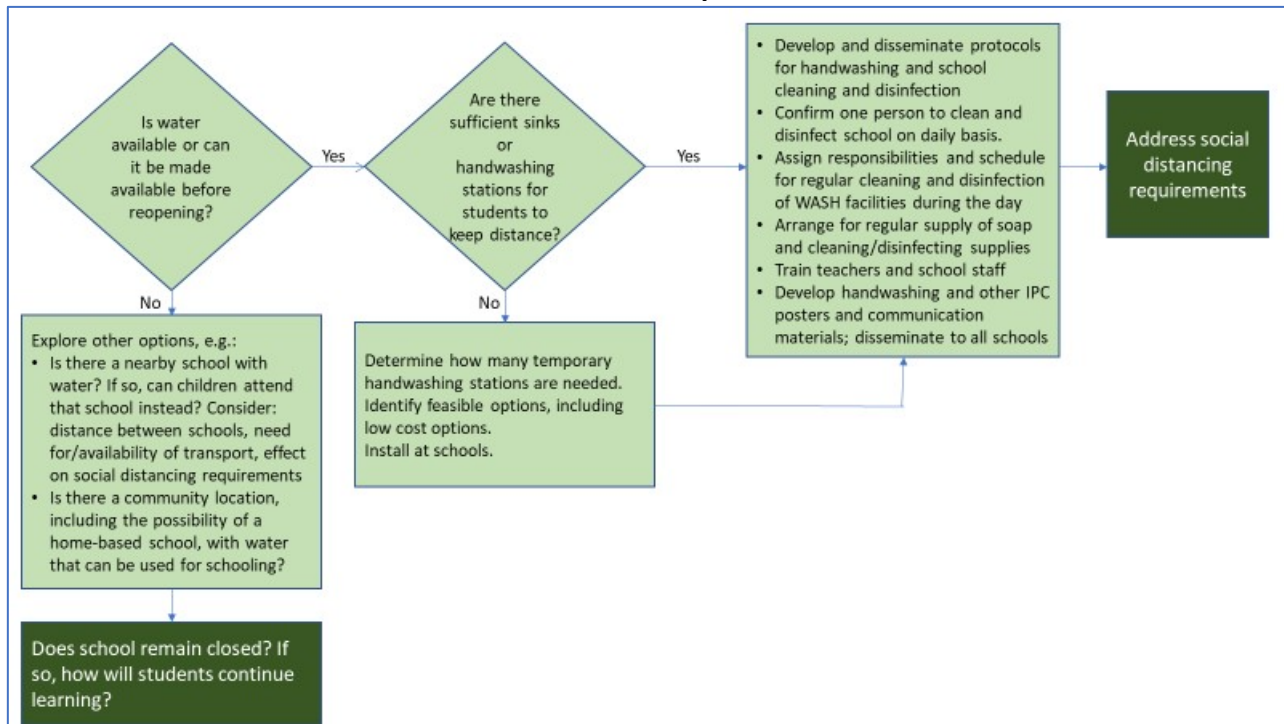
Provincial and district leaders along with SMCs, community members and parents need to work collectively to discuss how to provide water at all schools so they can safely reopen.

Options for increasing availability of water	Considerations
Communities to provide water to schools	Schools will need water storage facilities (e.g. tanks, water bladders, jerry cans). Depending on the size, these will need to be disinfected and refilled on a daily (or regular basis). This will require training on water purification and disinfection of water storage devices if water is also used for drinking.
Tinkering or private provision of water	Schools will need water storage tank or bladder. Procedures must be in place for regular cleaning and disinfecting of the tank and to avoid contamination of the water.
Approach private sector-to provide water under CSR Act or to provide water containers so that students can carry water to school for handwashing	Water will have to be provided in suitable quantities since it will be used for handwashing. Bottled water is not sufficient unless it is only used for drinking and there are other sources of water for handwashing and cleaning.

If water cannot be provided, are there other schooling options for affected students?

- Is there a nearby school with water and enough space for additional students? The main considerations will be distance to the school and the impact on social distancing requirements. (Options for social distancing are outlined in the next section.)
- Is there an available location within the community that has access to water and can be used temporarily as a school? This could include a home-based school, especially for younger children.
- If all options have been explored and water cannot be provided at school, it may be necessary to keep the school closed and to explore remote learning options for children from the affected school.

Flowchart of decisions and actions to meet WASH requirements



Resources required and to be included in budgets

- Cleaning supplies: mop, bucket, detergent and disinfecting supplies (see also SOP 1a), PPE for cleaners (masks and gloves)
- Additional handwashing stations based on identified need
- Soap (liquid)
- Alcohol-based hand rub (at least 60% alcohol to be effective)
- Water storage (tank, jerry cans, other)
- Water (if procured)
- Waste baskets
- IEC materials for handwashing and IPC – in multiple languages if needed
- Training for teachers and cleaning staff

Recommended SOPs for WASH

At a minimum, the following SOPs are recommended.

SOPs for WASH in Schools	
1.	Cleaning and disinfection of schools
2.	Handwashing – frequency and procedures

Draft templates for these SOPs are included in Annex 1. They are intended to be tailored to the needs of the province, be in place before schools reopen and followed once schools are operating. They may require frequent updating as more is learned about the actual COVID-19 coronavirus and how schools fare with the reopening process.

2. Social distancing requirements

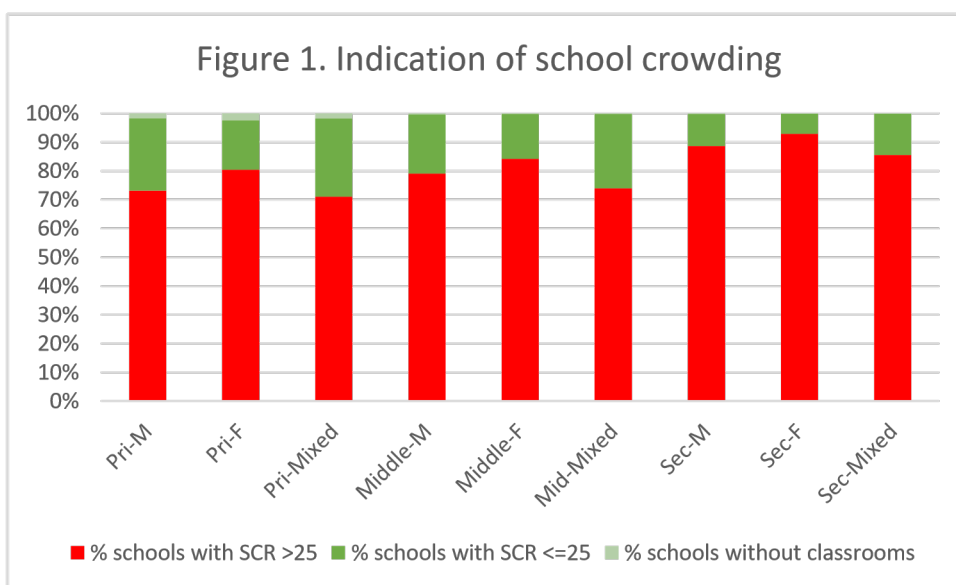
Key social distancing questions for provincial authorities

- What will be the social distancing requirements in schools?
- How will schooling be organized to meet social distancing requirements?
- If social distancing is not possible, what other options do schools have?
- What are the essential student learning outcomes (SLOs) to be achieved during the next school year?
- What flexibility do schools and districts have with regard to alternative learning options and academic plans?

The Government of Pakistan “Social Distancing Guidelines” recommend keeping a distance of 6 feet (about 2 metres) from others. In schools this will be challenging depending on the size of classrooms, number of children in the school and age of children. Younger children and children with special needs may have more difficulty remembering or understanding the need to keep distance from others and may need more frequent reminders or help.

WHO recommends physical distance of at least one metre (about 3 feet) between desks and everyone present at the school.² Examples from other countries where schools are reopening include: China requires one metre between students, Germany requires 1.5 metres; Denmark and Norway require two metres. In crowded schools, achieving social distancing requirements will most likely result in reduced hours of instruction.

Throughout Punjab province, **maintaining social distance will be a significant challenge in all schools.** As an indicator of school crowding, student-classroom ratios (SCRs) show that only about 26% of all primary schools, 22% of middle schools and 11% of all secondary (including higher secondary) schools have student-classroom ratios of 25 or fewer (NEMIS 2016-17). The



Consideration of essential student learning outcomes (SLOs) for each grade will help with the design of blended or distance learning strategies and with focused remediation efforts to make up for lost learning time during the period of school closures. assumption is that it will

² “Considerations for school-related public health measures in the context of COVID-19: Annex to Considerations in adjusting public health and social measures in the context of COVID-19”, 10 May 2020, WHO.

be easier to achieve physical distance requirements with class sizes of no more than 25 students. Table 3 shows the corresponding number of schools based on SCRs.

Table 3. Number of schools based on average student-classroom ratio.

Number of schools with:	Primary			Middle			Secondary			Total
	M	F	Mixed	M	F	Mixed	M	F	Mixed	
SCR > 25	3,988	2,513	20,186	1,679	1,461	3,332	2,873	1,675	1,744	39,451
SCR ≤ 25	1,369	536	7,735	439	271	1,167	361	127	292	12,297
No classrooms	91	75	497	6	3	10	7	2	2	693

Source: NEMIS-2016-17.

Average student-teacher ratios (STRs), while still greater than 25 (42 for Primary, and 31 for Middle, High and Higher Secondary levels), may facilitate compliance with social distancing requirements if additional learning spaces can be made available (rented, outdoor, temporary).

Crowding in schools with one or two classrooms

About 36% of schools (18,809) in Punjab have only one or two classrooms. The average student-teacher ratio in these schools is 37, though it varies from 17 in Chakwal to 51 in Pakpattan and D.G. Khan. Most of these schools will face challenges implementing physical distance requirements between students. Table 4 shows the average student-teacher ratio by district for the one or two classrooms schools. The districts are color-coded to indicate a continuum from green where physical distance requirements can be more easily met to yellow and red where additional measures such as different school times for different grades/groups of students will be required.

Table 4. Average student-teacher ratios (STR) in one or two classroom schools.

Average STR ≤ 25	Average STR between 26 and 35	Average STR > 35	
Attock, 25	Bahawalpur, 34	Bahawalnagar, 38	Mandi Baha Ud Din, 39
Chakwal, 17	Bhakkar, 34	Chiniot, 42	Multan, 41
Rawalpindi, 22	Gujranwala, 31	D.G. Khan, 51	Muzaffargarh, 40
	Gujrat, 35	Faisalabad, 45	Okara, 45
	Jehlum, 29	Hafizabad, 42	Pakpattan, 51
	Khushab, 30	Jhang, 37	Rahimyar Khan, 40
	Mianwali, 30	Kasur, 47	Rajanpur, 39
	Nankana Sahib, 34	Khanewal, 42	Sahiwal, 45
	Narowal, 28	Lahore, 36	T.T.Singh, 44
	Sargodha, 34	Layyah, 40	Vehari, 42
	Sheikhupura, 33	Lodhran, 36	
	Sialkot, 32		

Crowding in large schools

In total there are 4,559 schools in Punjab that have an enrolment of at least 500 students. These schools' range in size from 500 to more than 5,000. Social distancing will be a significant challenge in these schools, not only for individual classes but for managing crowding during non-class times of the day (such as arrival and departure).

Figure: 2

	Number of schools with enrolment of >= 500:				Average enrolment	Average STR	Average SCR
	500-999	1,000-1,999	>= 2,000	Total			
Primary							
Punjab	94	6	-	100	635	66	79
Urban	57	6	-	63	659	52	76
Rural	37	0	-	37	593	90	82
Middle							
Punjab	584	36	2	622	665	40	65
Urban	282	28	2	312	717	38	64
Rural	302	8	0	310	612	43	66
High							
Punjab	2,376	660	124	3,160	885	36	61
Urban	602	483	114	1,199	1,154	34	59
Rural	1,774	177	10	1,961	721	38	62
Higher Secondary							
Punjab	285	231	61	577	1,179	33	56
Urban	40	95	53	188	1,614	34	60
Rural	245	136	8	389	968	33	54

Source: NEMIS 2016-17

Schools with no classrooms

The small number schools in Punjab that do not have classrooms (about 2% of primary schools and a few middle and secondary schools) may find it easier to implement social distancing requirements (if outdoor space is available). Use of outdoor spaces, however, will not be possible in unfavorable weather conditions, especially during the extremes of summer and winter. When it is possible to use outdoor spaces, this will present extra challenges to teaching and learning since children will be spaced over a larger area and it will be difficult to present information to the entire class at once. Doing so will require teachers to structure activities for smaller groups of students while keeping everyone actively involved in learning activities.

Crowding in NFE Centers

Social distancing is needed in all classrooms – formal or non-formal. According to the Literacy & Non-Formal basic Education (L&NFBE) Department Punjab, there were 434,857 children enrolled in 13,356 NFE centres in 2019-20. Non-formal education usually takes place in teachers' houses or premises provided by the local community. Classes usually consist of 20-40 out of school children (4-14 years) in a single room, veranda or under a tree in a multi grade teaching set up. The L&NFBE Department is advising teachers to establish 2 or 3 class groups (as needed) so that physical distance of 6 feet in the school room can be observed.

The guidance offered below with regard to social distancing in classrooms applies to formal schools, special education institutions and non-formal education centers.

When determining how to achieve social distancing requirements, all aspects of the school day must be considered:

- In the classroom
- Upon arrival and departure from school
- In between classes if children typically move from one classroom to another
- During play or recess times
- During lunch (if provided)
- During transit to and from school (when relevant)

Social distancing requirements in the classroom

How to determine if all students can fit inside the classroom/learning space:

- 1. Arrange seating (desks, mats) so children will be seated at the recommended physical distance from each other and all facing forward.**
- 2. Determine how many children can be accommodated at one time in each classroom/learning space based on this seating arrangement.**
 - If all children can be accommodated, label desks or designated seating area (mats) with children's names so they know where to sit, or circle mark them with chalk to indicate their seating.
 - If the space is too small for all children to be present at the same time, decide how to arrange children into groups and how to arrange schooling, e.g. shifts, different days for different grades, etc. Table 5 presents several options along with a few considerations associated with using each option.

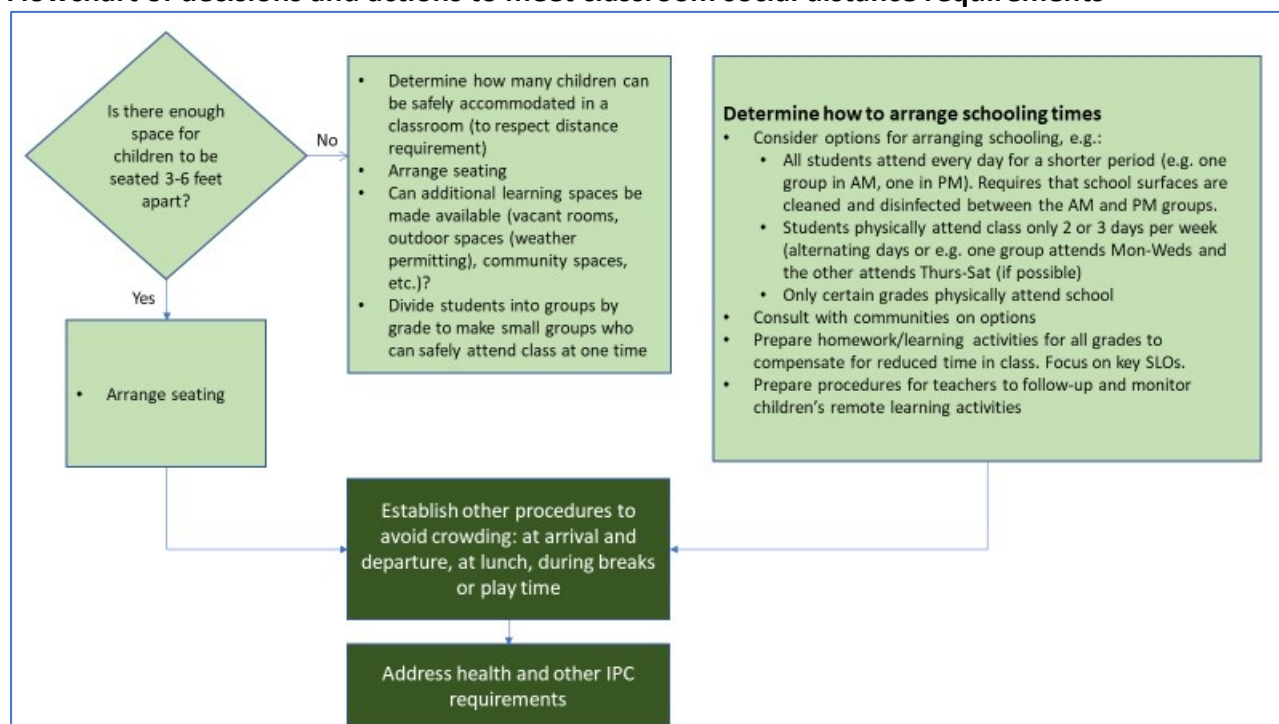
Implementing any of the options will have an impact on teachers and families. Therefore obtaining their input, either directly or through the SMC, will result in increased acceptance and continuation of learning for more children.

Table 5. Options for arranging schooling to meet social distancing requirements

Options to implement social distancing requirements:	Additional considerations
1. Implement different times (shifts) for different grades or groups of children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will there be an extra teaching load for teachers? • Will teachers be willing to assume any extra teaching load? If not, will additional teachers be needed? Will additional remuneration be needed? Who will fund? • Are there enough teachers who are qualified and willing to teach multiple classes of specific grades? For example, are secondary science teachers willing/able to teach science classes for grade 6-12 students if needed? • Blended learning activities may be needed to compensate for shortened hours of classroom instruction or for days when students are not physically attending school. Identification of critical SLOs will help structure learning activities during this time.

Options to implement social distancing Additional considerations requirements:	
2. Implement different days for different grades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Because teachers may be more tired in the afternoon, option 1 might also involve weekly changes in which grades attend in the morning and which in the afternoon. For example, during week 1, grades 1-3 attend school during the morning and grades 4-5 attend in the afternoon. In week 2, grades 4-5 will attend in the morning and grades 1-3 will attend in the afternoon. For option 2, children in different grades attend on different days. For example, children in grades 1-3 attend on Monday-Wednesday and children in grades 4-5 attend Thursday-Saturday (if feasible).
3. Identify additional learning spaces, temporary learning spaces, locations within the community)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will additional teachers or teaching assistants be needed to supervise and lead learning activities in the additional spaces? How will these teachers or teaching assistants be recruited? How much will it cost? What are the budget implications associated with additional learning spaces? Who will fund? Will the weather impede the use of outdoor spaces?
4. Reopen schools only for specific grades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will teachers manage distance learning for other grades, including assessing students' progress in relation to SLOs?

Flowchart of decisions and actions to meet classroom social distance requirements



Social distancing requirements outside the classroom

Teachers need to make sure that social distance requirements are met throughout the rest of the school day as indicated in the following table. Teachers need to be aware that social distancing may be especially difficult for younger children and gently remind them to keep distance from others.

Table 6. Options to consider

Other situations where social distancing is required	Options to consider
1. Upon arrival and departure from school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different grades can start and end at different times, especially for large schools. This will ease crowding on school grounds before children start class and when they are released for the day.
2. In between classes, if children typically move from one classroom to another	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended: Keep students in a “class group” for the entire school day if possible. Teachers move from one class group to another to avoid congestion in corridors. • If this is not possible, additional time will be needed between class sessions. A coordinated schedule is also needed to move one group of students at a time between classes (e.g. all grade 9 students move first, followed by grade 10 students, etc.) • Close all common spaces such as a library, multi-purpose hall, sports field, staff room
3. During play or recess times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stagger the times that different classes have outside activities • Develop procedures for what types of play activities are allowed • Expect that children (especially young children) will not closely follow social distancing requirements during play. Make sure everyone washes their hands before returning to their classrooms
4. During lunch (if applicable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended: children eat lunch in their classrooms • Additional supplies and waste baskets will be needed to clean classrooms following lunch • Children to wash their hands before and after eating
5. Transport to school (when relevant)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage all children to wear masks/face coverings and gloves during transit. • If transport is provided, what are the requirements for physical distancing in the van? What are the additional transport requirements to maintain physical distance during transport to and from school?

What is the impact if not all teachers return?

Another factor that education authorities must consider when planning to reopen school is the age and health of teachers and other staff members since those most at risk of serious illness and potentially death from COVID-19 are older individuals and those with chronic medical conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease and respiratory diseases.³ According to an analysis by Our World in Data, the case fatality rate in China, Spain, Italy

³ <https://ourworldindata.org/mortality-risk-covid>

and South Korea starts to increase for those over age 50, with significant increases beyond age 60. **If older teachers and those with pre-existing health conditions do not return to school (either through government directive or personal choice), this will contribute to over-crowding in schools and needs to be factored into reopening plans.** Similarly, if teachers are reluctant to use public transport to get to school for fear of infection, they may decide not to return thereby making social distancing in schools more challenging. Note that it may be possible to use these teachers to support remote and blended learning activities.

Resources required and to be included in budgets

1. Allowances for formal, special education and NFE teachers (if needed due to extra shifts or hours of instruction and to compensate for use of own premises for longer period of time in the case of NFE teachers)
2. Payments/stipends for additional teachers or teaching assistants (if needed to meet space requirements)
3. Additional learning spaces (if any): rental, temporary spaces
4. Learning materials for blended or distance learning options

Recommended SOPs for Social Distancing Requirements

At a minimum, the following SOPs are recommended.

SOPs for Social Distancing Requirements

3. Social distancing in the classroom and during the school day (in the classroom, arrival, departure, between classes, on school grounds, during meals)
4. SOPs for transport to and from school

Draft templates for these SOPs are included in Annex 1. They are intended to be tailored to the needs of the province, be in place before schools reopen and followed once schools are operating. They may require frequent updating as more is learned about the actual COVID-19 coronavirus and how schools fare with the reopening process.

For guidance on organizing blended learning options, please refer to the separate Learning Continuity Framework.

3. School health and other Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) requirements

Key health and other IPC questions for provincial authorities

- Are all schools required to establish a link to the nearest Basic Health Unit or health clinic?
- Is mandatory temperature/health screening required for everyone entering school premises?
- What type and supply of thermometers and PPE must be available at every school? How will these be purchased by schools?
- Are visitors allowed on school premises? If so, who?
- Are cloth face masks mandatory? If so, for whom – teachers, all students, students in certain grades?
- Does a head teacher have authority to temporarily close their school in case of a confirmed infection among staff, children or family members thereof?
- What arrangements have been put in school for the psychosocial wellbeing of the children according to the guidelines/referral procedures for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MH&PSS)?

Much of infection prevention and control for COVID-19 is accomplished through social distancing and provision of sufficient WASH facilities and supplies. Because this is a new situation, it is unlikely that other preventive aids like Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as masks and gloves are currently available in schools. Likewise, local communities, including school councils, head teachers and teachers may not be fully sensitized and/or trained in preventive protocols and SOPs for preventing infection and efficient coordination mechanisms with the Health sector may not yet be established.

A secondary health risk associated with the COVID-19 pandemic is the risk of resurgence of other diseases or viruses especially if families have delayed routine medical care. Schools will also need to make sure that entry immunization checks are in place. These checks should confirm vaccination status for outbreak-prone vaccine-preventable diseases (e.g. measles) and remind parents of the importance of ensuring their children are up to date with all eligible vaccinations. When school-based immunization programmes are in place, these also need to have a plan for catch-up vaccination if needed.

The protection of children in educational facilities is particularly important. Precautions are necessary to prevent the potential spread of COVID-19 in school settings; however, care must also be taken to avoid stigmatizing students and staff who may have been exposed to the virus. It is important to remember that COVID-19 does not differentiate between borders, ethnicities, disability status, age or gender. Therefore, it is essential to encourage students to prevent and address stigma. School authorities, especially teachers and student leaders, need to be trained in mental health and psychosocial first aid support possibly before schools are reopened. This will adequately prepare them to recognize when students and other workers require psychosocial support.

Health-related procedures and supplies to be in place for schools to reopen

Table7. Health related considerations

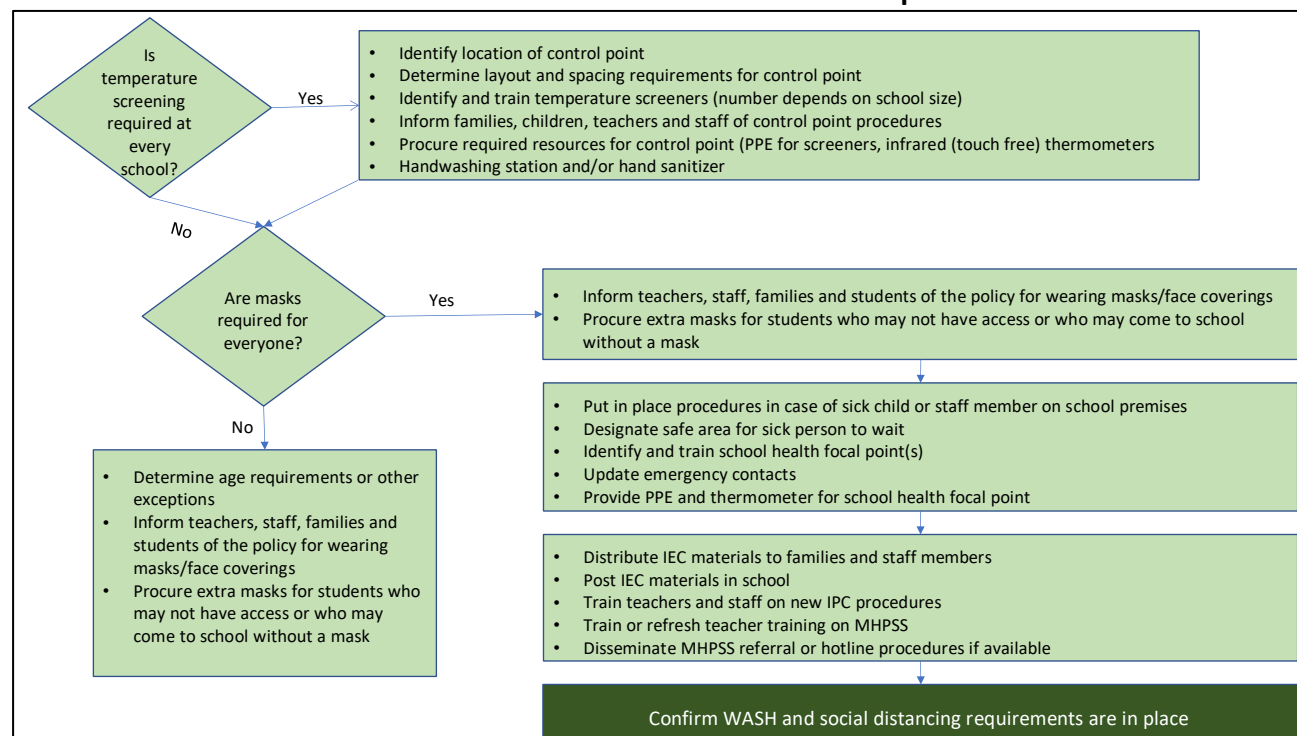
Decide on health procedures to put in for when schools reopen:	Considerations place
1. School/NFE centre links with nearest Basic Health Unit (BHU) or health clinic	<p>This is essential for several reasons as it will facilitate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sharing information about current transmission of COVID19 cases in the community or information about whether children, staff or their families have been infected • referral of any students or staff members who may become ill. • obtaining advice on policies and procedures from health officials, especially with regard to issues such as decontaminating schools used as quarantine centres, and procedures for what to do if someone becomes ill at school – both in terms of referral and in relation to whether the school might need to be closed for 2-3 days for additional cleaning and disinfection.
2. Health screening point at entrance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In instances where authorities decide to institute temperature/health screening (as decided for Special Education Institutions and Non-formal Education Centres), guidance should be issued on procedures to follow, who will be screened before entering the institution/centre (teachers, staff, students), what to do if someone has a fever or other COVID-19 symptoms and whether visitors will be allowed on school grounds. If they are allowed, they should also undergo temperature/health screening before entering. Such a policy will have implications in terms of resources required including training of staff and provision of PPEs and thermometers for screeners
3. Rules for cloth face masks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A policy/directive is needed to specify who must wear a cloth face mask at school – all staff? all children or only children above a certain age? • The policy should state any exceptions, for example children with pre-existing respiratory difficulties who might not be able to wear a face mask. • Teachers and other school staff should model good practices in wearing face masks properly. • Schools will need to inform parents of the requirements for cloth face masks and provide awareness on how and when to wash the masks. • Other considerations: • Is it practical to expect that young children will wear a mask for the duration of the school day? • What assistance, if any, will special needs learners require? • Will there be times during the day that children are not expected to wear masks, e.g. while eating or during play times. • What happens if a child comes to school without a mask? Will extra masks be available at the school? • What provisions will be made for children who are unable to provide their own mask?

Decide on health procedures to put in for when schools reopen:	
Considerations place	
4. Procedure if someone becomes unwell during the school day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools need directions on what to do if a student, teacher or other staff member is unwell at school. See sample SOPs 6 and 7a-7b for examples. Essential for the health and care of the individual who is ill and also for preventing the spread of infection. Will this result in temporary closure of a school? For how long?
5. Procedure for a confirmed case of COVID-19 among school community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provincial education officials must decide under which condition, and for how long, schools may be temporarily closed if there is a confirmed (or suspected) case of COVID19 among the school community. In the case of Non-Formal Education Centres (NFE), if a teacher or household member contracts COVID-19, the centre will be required to close. When possible, the directives may specify how long schools/NFE centres will remain closed and the criteria for reopening (such as no new cases of COVID-19 in the community and the cleaning and disinfection of schools/NFE centres). Schools will then need procedures to follow. See sample SOPs 8a and 8b for examples.
6. Guidelines/referral procedures for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MH&PSS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COVID-19 has impacted teachers, students, their families and their communities in multiple ways. Many will have experienced increased stress as a result of school closures and reopening. Some will also have experienced the physical and mental stress of the illness if they or one of their family members were ill with COVID-19. What arrangements will be put in place to support the psychosocial wellbeing of students and staff? Do teachers need training or refreshers on Psychosocial Support and Psychosocial First Aid to support children and staff and to identify those who might need additional attention? If referral mechanisms for MHPSS are available, how will the details be communicated to district officers and head teachers? In addition, students, families and education staff need to be informed of procedures for accessing phone support services, if available, and communication channels need to be tested

Decide on health procedures to put in place for when schools reopen: Considerations

- What procedures will be followed in case of suspected infection, including guidance for school staff to discreetly deal with children and young people/teachers who show symptoms without creating harm for the individual?
- Are mechanisms in place to identify children and young people in high distress and/or with mental health conditions and refer them to specialized services?
- What mechanisms are in place to coordinate MHPSS activities and referrals across sectors, including Education, Child Protection and Health?
- Have mother-tongue based communication channels been established to inform families with members in high-risk groups (i.e., elderly, persons with chronic disease) if they may be impacted by an infection case at school? Protect privacy of persons suspected to be infected and use factual language to avoid stigmatization.
- Is it possible to arrange for child protection case workers/social workers to be present at schools during reopening? Education authorities will also need to work with the Social Welfare Department to prepare child protection case workers/social workers to receive increased reports at time of reopening.

Flowchart of decisions and actions to meet health and other IPC requirements



Resources required and to be included in budgets

1. PPE (masks and gloves) for staff at control point and for health focal point in case a child or staff member becomes ill at school
2. Touch free (infrared) thermometers (at least two per school; more for larger schools – at least one for each screener at control point and one for school health focal point)
3. Training for guards and others at control points
4. Training for teachers on procedures for IPC and what to do if there is a sick child in their classroom
5. Training for health focal points
6. Training for all teachers on MHPSS
7. Age appropriate, gender-sensitive, inclusive, accessible messages through IEC materials for students, families, teachers - including handwashing, use of masks, social distancing procedures, control point procedures, psychosocial wellbeing and stigma prevention etc.

Recommended SOPs for school health and other infection prevention and control requirements

At a minimum, the following SOPs are recommended.

SOPs for school health and other infection prevention and control requirements

5. Disinfectant gate/temperature screening procedures
6. What to do if a child or staff member becomes ill during the day
7. What to do if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 among school community
8. Guidelines/referral procedures for mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS)

Draft templates for these SOPs are included in Annex 1. They are intended to be tailored to the needs of the province, be in place before schools reopen and followed once schools are operating. They may require frequent updating as more is learned about the actual COVID-19 coronavirus and how schools fare with the reopening process.

4. Teaching and learning and wellbeing

Key questions about teaching and learning and wellbeing for provincial authorities

- What type of remediation programme will be put in place?
- How will the content from the school closure period be covered to maximize student learning?
- Which parts of the curriculum will be prioritized?
- What training is required for teachers and AEOs in terms of review, remediation, and curriculum adjustments?
- What support mechanisms must be in place for teachers?
- Will a flexible operational/academic calendar and assessment system be developed in case of renewed COVID-19 outbreaks?
- What other training or support is needed for teachers before schools reopen, e.g. psychosocial, health and hygiene procedures, how to prepare for blended or remote learning activities?
- What is the plan to ensure that all children return to school?
- What remote learning arrangements will be developed for children who do not return to school due to illness or because they (or a family member) are at high risk of COVID-19?
- What is the longer-term strategy for ensuring continuation of learning?

Schools have been closed in Punjab since March, 2020. The Government has launched Taleem Ghar/tele school programme as a means of continuing learning, but majority of children do not have access to even television much less internet. This is especially the case for the more than 34,000 special needs learners in Punjab. It is still unknown how long schools will be closed, but there is an urgent need for all educators to prepare to reopen schools safely – for remediation of lost learning, to avoid children dropping out and to promote the psychosocial health and wellbeing of children. Preparing to reopen schools is a matter of safety and health as described in the first three sections of this guide. Critically it also requires preparations to enhance learning. Most likely nearly all children will have achieved very little learning during the school closure period, which means a potential loss of instruction of at least 3-4 months. A well thought through remediation programme will be needed to compensate for learning losses of this academic year and to avoid further losses in learning in the next academic year.

The school closure period will also have introduced additional stresses into the lives of children and staff, due to lost learning but also due perhaps to illness or to the economic impact of the virus on families. Some children may have been exposed to physical, psychological or sexual violence, or neglect in their homes. Others may have needed to support family incomes and/or care for other family members. Children with disabilities, refugee children and economically disadvantaged children will have been particularly at risk. The reopening of schools can also play a crucial role in providing safe places for children and fostering their mental health, psychosocial support needs and overall wellbeing. Training or orientation for teachers on basic messages of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) and stigma prevention will be needed before schools reopen.

In addition, establishing or strengthening linkages with the Social Welfare Department will be important for children who need additional support.

Teaching and Learning considerations

- **Plan for remediation**

Plans for remediation need to include how to teach key learning content missed during the school closure period as well as how to re-teach materials from the month or two before schools were closed. Re-teaching or reviewing the most important SLOs/topics – those which have a progression or that are needed for the next class – will give children a chance to practice and engage with prior learning content before moving on to new concepts and content. Relevant Punjab Curriculum and Text Book Board (PCTB) and relevant bodies will need to review the curriculum for each grade and develop a remediation plan to address how learning content from March through the end of the Academic Year will be addressed once physical schooling resumes. The review should assess the SLOs for each grade with a view toward identifying foundational SLOs that are critical to students' ability to progress from one grade to the next. This may require temporarily dropping some aspects of the curriculum to focus on foundational skills that are needed for children to progress in the subsequent grade. This review should also guide instruction for the 2020/2021 school year, including the time to be spent on review and remediation (perhaps the first 15-20 days from the date that the academic session begins). As instructional time is likely to be reduced in the upcoming year, these adjustments may be needed beyond 2021 since, at least in the short term, blended or distance learning activities will not adequately compensate for lost classroom time.

Possible steps for remediation and maximizing learning	Suggested process for developing a remediation plan
1. Streamline existing curriculum based on review and selection of foundational SLOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form technical working group (or related forum of experts) on curriculum / learning (experts from PCTB, PITE, L&NFBE, other related SED wings, academia and possibly textbooks publishers)
2. Develop blended approach incorporating face to face classroom elements and distance learning elements to be completed at home.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review SLOs, topics and chapters of foundational subjects and suggest final chapter/topics along with allied/referred SLOs Develop brief guide for teachers with information of chapters /topics of each subject to be covered Update /development of Schemes of studies. Develop monthly learning timetables for students with clear signposting and study tips. The learning timetables will outline tasks, activities and learning for students using the textbooks. Print and distribute learning timetables to all students and teachers to support learning remotely through phone calls, visits to homes and marking work.

- **Develop flexible operational/academic calendars**

Since it is expected that COVID-19 will be a serious public health problem for at least the next year and that a second wave is possible, QAED should begin the process of developing flexible operational/academic calendars that take into consideration possible temporary closures of schools in the entire province or in designated hot spots. Policies related to attendance and dropout may need to be relaxed and those related to the required number of hours of instruction or number of days for the school year will need to be reviewed to consider how to account for time spent during periods of blended or distance learning. Depending on the status of the pandemic, automatic promotion may again be needed for the next academic year.

- **Consider how to implement formative assessments**

The Assessment Policy Framework (APF2019) is part of pre-COVID education reforms in Punjab with the objective of using assessments to support and encourage learning at all levels (Punjab RISE). While the APF lays out the plan for the next 10 years, teachers will need a short-term intervention to help them assess students' learning, especially in relation to blended and distance learning content. Alternatively, PEC can assist with development of revised assessment guidelines on formative assessments, which may include multiple choice questions and quizzes.

- **Develop plan for teacher training and support prior to reopening** At a minimum, teachers need training for:

- health, hygiene and infection prevention in relation to what is known about COVID-19 and risks of infection as well as procedures to be followed once schools reopen including hand washing, wearing masks, social distancing and dealing with children who become ill in class
- psychosocial wellbeing (see also SOPs 9 and 10 for key MHPSS messages for teachers and families)

- reviewing the curriculum and prioritizing essential elements
- developing assignments for distance learning or blended learning (the latter is especially important when children will be attending in shifts or only on certain days of the week)

Due to the increasing number of COVID-19 cases in Punjab, options for how to conduct teacher training also need to be considered. Is face to face training possible? What other options exist for delivering information to teachers? In addition, what types of remote support and follow-up can be offered to teachers as they prepare their lesson plans for the first weeks of schooling (to review and address elements that were not covered during the previous school year) and for preparing blended learning activities?

District education officers and deputy district education officers will also need training on the above topics so they are better prepared to support teachers in efforts to prevent infection and deliver consistent messages to children about COVID-19 and how to stay healthy through hygiene, social distancing and use of face masks.

- **Conduct enrolment drives and demand generation campaigns**

Provincial and district officials must consider how to bring all children back to school once schools reopen. Parents and children will need assurances about the measures that have been put in place to keep their children safe while in school. Enrolment drives and demand generation campaigns should include: a communications strategy (television and radio campaigns, mosque announcements) and actions for engaging local NGOs to mobilize parents to send their children to schools with special emphasis on areas with high dropout rates. Due to health concerns, some parents may not want to send their children back to school immediately. They will therefore need a distance learning option for their children.

Of most concern will be re-enrolling marginalized children who are at higher risk of dropping out. The economic effects of COVID-19 have hit poor families the hardest. There is a risk of increased child labor and a risk that girls may be kept out of school to either help with home-based labor or because families prioritize sending their boys back to school. The government has taken some steps that will help mitigate this risk. Programmes such as Ehsaas Emergency Cash, the Prime Minister's COVID-19 Fund and the Ehsaas Rashan Portal (which links donors to CSOs who are then responsible for distributing food rations to eligible families/individuals) were designed to provide assistance to families facing economic hardship from COVID-19. School leaders can play a role in disseminating information about these programmes within their communities. In the case of the Waseela e Taleem cash transfers, school leaders can remind school councils, parents and community leaders of the primary school attendance requirements.

Education authorities may also face another challenge related to COVID-19, i.e. the chance that significant numbers of children previously enrolled in low cost private schools may return to or enroll in the public sector. Officials will also need to consider possible increases in enrolment in their planning for school reopening.

Activating School Councils and Non-Formal Education Institution Management Committees in the back to school process will be critical. Their support will be essential for re-enrolling students and communicating with community members and parents about procedures adopted for safe school

reopening. The school-specific Non-Salary Budget (NSB) provides an incentive for re-enrolling all children, with additional incentives for increasing girls' enrolment. In addition, the NSB will be especially useful for helping to address the WASH and infection prevention procedures needed for safe school reopening.

- **Develop distance learning arrangements for children who are unable to return to school for health reasons**

Some children may be unable to return to school due to pre-existing health conditions (their own or a family member's) that make them at high risk to COVID-19. Two existing strategies that will be used include Taleem Ghar and the formation of small groups where teachers or peers can assist such students and share their learning with them. Education authorities will need to consider if other arrangements are needed for these children. Will they, for example, receive weekly learning activities/assignments that will then be reviewed by their teacher? Will these children be prioritized for online learning activities, including providing them with internet-enabled devices and/or connections so they can access online learning options? What if they do not have access to Taleem Ghar?

- **Develop longer-term strategy for continuation of learning**

As indicated in its "Provincial Plans/Strategies for Education Response and Recovery for COVID-19", the government of Punjab has laid out short and medium-term strategies for continuity of education through establishing online/off-line digital learning platforms for students while addressing accessibility issues for marginalized children especially girls." The Pakistan Social & Living Standards Measurement Survey (PSLM) 2018-19 indicated the following for households in Punjab:

- % with mobile phones: 95%
- % with access to electricity: 95%
- % with access to internet: 33%
- % with computer/laptop/tablet: 15%

In addition, L&NFBDE Department conducted a survey of NFE families to determine their access to different components of the "Taleem Ghar/Tele School" Program. For NFE learners they found:

- % of learners who have TV with ONLY Antenna or Dish: 31% (min: 13% in Rajanpur; max: 50% Mianwali)
- % of learners who have TV with cable facility: 17% (min: 0.3 in Bhakkar; max: 41% Lahore)
- % of learners who do not have cable but have mobile with internet facility: 4% (min: 0.1% Bhakkar; max: 11% Gujranwala)
- % of learners with computer/laptop with internet: 0.8% (min: 0 in Bhakkar; max: 3.4% in Gujranwala)
- % of learners who do not have any facility for "Taleem Ghar/Tele /School" program: 51% (min: 23% Sialkot; max: 78% Jhang and Rajanpur)

At least for the next year, any learning strategy adopted must include no tech options to ensure that all children are treated equitably and have access to learning even when not in school. NFE Centres will also need to make plans for continuity of learning in case an NFE teacher or household member is infected with COVID-19, since this will require the NFE Centre to close for at least two weeks after the recovery of the infected individual(s).

A separate Learning Continuity Framework is being developed which can help guide answers to some of these questions and provide SOPs. Sample SOPs for MHPSS are included in Annex 1.

5. System strengthening and financial preparedness

Key questions about system strengthening and financial preparedness for provincial authorities	
✓	What provincial policies, plans and SOPs need to be designed and implemented for the safe reopening of schools and continuation of learning?
✓	What arrangements can schools use for recruiting additional teachers (or assistants) needed because of COVID-19?
✓	What are the cost and financing implications associated with reopening schools and preparing for ongoing continuation of learning?
✓	What special monitoring and data collection activities are needed as a result of COVID-19?

Various aspects of the education system will need review and strengthening to manage the effects of COVID19. This includes the necessity of issuing special administrative instructions and procedures and the need to re-allocate existing resources or mobilize additional resources needed for safe school operations and continuation of learning. Critical areas include:

- **Policies, plans and SOPs:** As mentioned in the National Response and Resilience Plan for COVID-19, provincial authorities are encouraged to conduct a quick policy review to see which, if any, policies need revision or are lacking. Any changes or additions can be issued as emergency directives/policy adjustments. Policies of particular relevance will relate to school attendance and dropout, school start/stop during the COVID-19 pandemic and associated levels of decision-making authority; compliance with SOPs for school health and safety; grade level promotion and formative assessment of student learning; curriculum implementation and human resource management (see below).

SED, L&NFBE and SpED will also need standing operating procedure (SOPs) and checklists to be followed at various levels of the public education sector in the province, including coordination with Health Department and PDMA. Examples are provided in Annex 1 of this document.

- **Human resources:** Safely reopening schools will require extra effort on the part of teachers. They may be asked to teach multiple shifts or multiple grades. If meeting social distancing requirements means that only two to three classes are attending school at a given time, all teachers can still be present to keep class sizes small and make sure all classrooms have a teacher present. Doing this will also require lesson plans to be made collectively and shared. To compensate for loss of classroom time with groups of students, teachers will also need to prepare home-based learning assignments and take responsibility for reviewing them and providing feedback to learners. Provincial authorities, in consultation with teachers and teachers' unions, will need to agree on whether additional compensation for teachers will be provided due to these extra demands and whether any changes are needed to flexible leave plans and access to health benefits/retirements plans.

Results from the "Survey on SED Response to COVID-19 School Strategy" disseminated by SED raised a concern about teachers who do not live in the town/village where they teach and who commute using public transportation. The inability to social distance during transport puts teachers at increased risk to COVID-19 and may therefore prevent some from returning to schools. In these areas, SED may want to consider providing transportation or allowances to teachers so they can arrange safer transport.

Schools will have to determine whether there will be a need for additional teachers or teaching assistants based on social distancing requirements or in case teachers do not return to classrooms due to age or pre-existing health conditions. Policies should be clarified about the provision of cooperative/support teachers, and other mechanisms and options for recruiting any needed additional teachers, such as through NCHD or Teach for Pakistan, should be explored. For teachers who do not return to classrooms because of high risk to COVID-19, authorities should consider how those teachers can instead be engaged to support blended or distance learning activities.

- **Costing:** to include all preventive measures and accessories required for safe reopening of schools, including training and orientation of education personnel deployed at various levels, and costs for additional learning spaces and teachers where needed, as well as post crisis remedial teaching arrangements etc.
- **Resource Mobilization and Allocation:** SED, L&NFBE and SpED will need to reallocate or mobilize additional financial resources for the safe reopening of schools. A multi-pronged strategy for resource mobilization should be envisioned and followed that may consist of:
 - Reallocate existing budget ○ Request additional allocations from Finance Department
 - Approach international donors and local philanthropists for assistance
 - Appeal to the private sector for support in cash or in-kind
 - Appeal to public representatives, civil society, and media in mobilization
- **COVID 19 Specific Units or Processes for Coordination, Supervision and Monitoring:** Most of the activities relating to safe reopening of schools will be new to SED, L&NFBE and SpEd. Therefore, it may be necessary to create units or sections that will be responsible for coordination, supervision and monitoring of COVID 19 related activities. The PMIU will need to consider how to designate responsibilities and any special monitoring or support tasks, such as:
 - Hotline- Helpline - Government Department to decide and provide assistance to teachers ○ Development of supervision and monitoring procedures, for example:
 - Education Monitoring Authority to receive data from districts, and update regularly, and share with Department
 - All checklists – Departmental level data collection/monitoring through refined checklist can be done by Monitoring and Evaluation Assistants (MEAs) on 6 monthly ??? basis and be incorporated as part of their regular monitoring so they can report back on compliance with COVID-19 SOPs for at least one year.
 - Assistant Education Officers (AEOs) at District level will also be oriented on the SOPs and the Checklists to support the schools and the district offices on their compliance.
- **EMIS:** Consider whether changes are needed to EMIS in order to capture school data corresponding to the needs of COVID 19, especially data needed for taking policy decisions about various dimensions of the safe reopening strategy or framework. These changes should take into account the monitoring systems established (as discussed in the above point).

Annex 1

SOP Templates

The SOP templates provided in this annex are examples that can be adapted by provincial authorities to match the circumstances within the province, district or school.

As everyone continues to learn more about COVID-19 and its effects, provincial leaders will need to revisit these SOPs regularly – and adjust as needed based on the prevailing situation. The levels of uncertainty associated with COVID-19 will require a flexible approach that can react quickly to meet changing needs.

The following SOP templates are included in this annex. Provincial leaders should choose and revise the ones that are most applicable for their province. Ideally school management will also be allowed some flexibility to refine the SOPs for school staff to meet the needs of their specific school.

List of SOP templates provided

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**SOP 1a: Cleaning and disinfection of schools: for school management****Process**

1. Prepare cleaning schedule for the school. (See sample below.)
2. Communicate the schedule and train school cleaners on cleaning and disinfection procedures.
3. Print and post IEC material in key locations as a daily reminder for cleaners.
4. Procure personal protective equipment (PPE) for cleaners to include:
 - a. Reusable heavy-duty plastic gloves (covering hands and forearms)
 - b. Protective mask
 - c. Apron as protection from possible spills and drops from the disinfectant spraying solutions
 - d. Safety glasses – to avoid splashes
5. Procure or verify availability of cleaning and disinfection supplies, to include a. Detergent
 - a. Sodium hypochlorite at 0.5% (equivalent 5000ppm) for disinfecting surfaces
 - b. 70% ethyl alcohol for disinfection of small items
 - c. 10 or 20L buckets for the cleaning and detergent
 - d. Mop head or floor cloths in cotton or microfiber
 - e. Surface cleaning clothes At least 4
 - f. Portable containers for cleaning products or solutions
 - g. Latex gloves
 - h. Plastic sprayer bottle, 1 liter
6. Monitor to make sure that cleaning and disinfection procedures are being followed correctly

Schedule for cleaning and disinfection

Area	Frequency	Method
Surfaces in classrooms, corridors, staffroom, any indoor area	Daily (or between shifts)	Clean (between shifts); Clean and disinfect (daily)
High touch surfaces such as desks, chairs, cupboards, fans railings	Regularly –recommendation, e.g. at least twice a day	Clean and disinfect
All water and sanitation facilities	Regular intervals –recommendation, attendant is on duty to clean after every use	Clean and disinfect Includes thorough cleaning (scrubbing) and disinfection of: - Toilet, toilet seat and cover - Squatting pan (if applicable) - Handwashing sinks and taps - Garbage/waste containers - High touch areas: doorknobs/handles and walls - Floors

Common areas, such as hallways, multi-purpose halls, etc.	Regular intervals – recommendation, once a day and ask children to avoid touching walls and handrails unless needed for support	Clean and disinfect
Entire school premises	Every alternate Saturday	Clean and disinfect

SOP for School Cleaners⁴

WASH in Schools



SOP 1b: Cleaning and disinfection of schools: for school cleaners

Process

1. PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)

- Wear PPE while on duty (including when preparing disinfectant solutions). PPE is meant to protect you from direct contact and splashes of both coronavirus contaminated fluid/material and disinfectant solutions/product.
- Clean and disinfect reusable PPE at the end of each cleaning session. Reusable PPE should be disposed when deteriorated. Disposable PPE should be safely disposed of after use or when deteriorated.

2. Cleaning of surfaces

- **Once every day** (twice in case of 2 daily shifts of students), wash all highly touched surfaces (desks, chairs, doors, handles, water taps, rails etc.) with detergent (only when visibly soiled) and then disinfect. If not visibly soiled, you can directly disinfect using a cleaning cloth with disinfectant solution. Clean and disinfect these surfaces before you start cleaning/disinfecting the floor.
- **Once every day** (twice in case of 2 daily shifts of students), wash floors and toilets with detergent and then disinfect. Wet mop the floors before starting to clean with detergent. Wet mopping is recommended, rather than using a broom, to limit the movement and spread of dust and microorganisms.

To clean surfaces, use the “2 buckets method” (figure 1):

Fill one bucket with detergent and water (cleaning solution bucket) and the other bucket with water only (rinse bucket).

- Dip the mop pad or mop head into bucket of cleaning solution.
- Wring out with the wringer above the rinse bucket.
- Clean the room beginning at the end opposite the entrance (do not go back over an already mopped area, because this re-deposits dirt on the floor, figure 2); work moving backward, making an “S” or “8” shape (figure 3).
- Rinse the mop pad or mop head in the rinse bucket.
- Wring out over the rinse bucket before dipping it back in the cleaning solution.

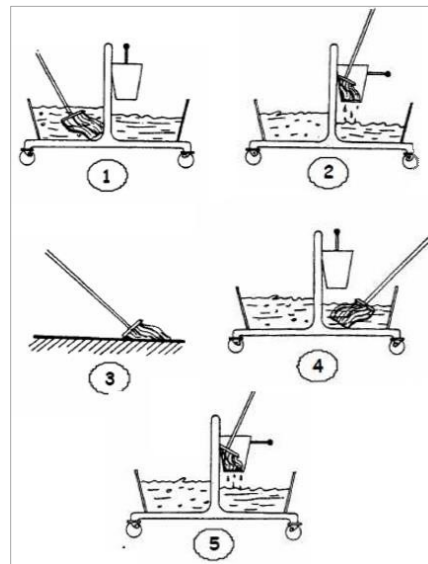


Figure 1

Change the cleaning and rinsing solutions as soon as they become saturated with dirt.

It is important to properly clean surfaces before disinfection because inorganic and organic materials that remain on the surfaces interfere with the effectiveness of disinfectant.

⁴ Based on Save the Children “School and Household Hygiene COVID-19 Guidance”, version 3, updated 5 May 2020.

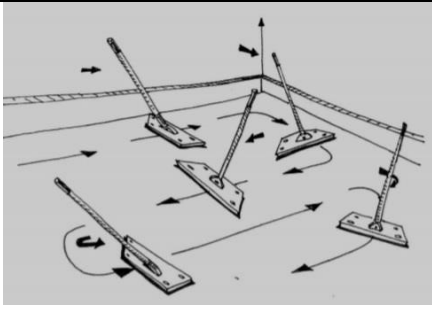


Figure 2



Figure 3

3. Disinfection of surfaces

After wet mopping and cleaning of floors with detergent, start disinfection.

Disinfection of floors using buckets and mop is preferred, as it is a safer procedure: cleaners will be less exposed to the disinfectant solution and possible splashes from the soiled surface or floor.

- Use the same “2 buckets method” for the disinfection procedure. The 2 buckets previously used for cleaning solution and for rinsing solution should be emptied from their content, washed and rinsed and then filled with sodium hypochlorite at 0.5% (equivalent 5000ppm) solution (instead of detergent solution) and water (as rinsing solution).
- Mop floors with 0.1% sodium hypochlorite solution and allow to air dry. Do not rinse or dry floors. Natural air dry will allow an adequate contact time to disinfect the floors.
- Disinfection should happen in absence of other persons ideally in the afternoon after the end of the lessons or early in the morning before lessons start. After disinfection, the environment should be well ventilated; keep windows open to allow the solution to dry. Leave the environment.

4. Preparing and storing disinfectant solution

- Work in a well-ventilated room or outside in the shade but protected from the wind.
- Wear personal protective equipment (apron, high filtration mask, gloves, goggles or shield).
- Prepare solutions with clean, cold (or room temperature) water, in plastic containers only.
- Respect the recommended dilutions as described in kits files (an over-diluted product is less active; an over-concentrated product can cause irritation and corrosion).
- Use a clean, dry, plastic tablespoon to measure the dose of product or the measuring spoon or cup provided by the manufacturer.
- Pour the amount of water required into a container then add the product (and not the other way round) without splashing. Mix well using a clean stirrer/stick used only for this purpose. It is recommended to prepare the 0.1% solution in 20 litre plastic buckets. Let the solution rest for 30 minutes before it becomes active and ready to be used.
- During the day unused solutions may be stored in a plastic container (drum) with a lid. Label the container, specifying the chlorine concentration, to make sure people won't drink the content. The container with solution should be placed in a shaded and ventilated place out of the reach of children.
- Do not add any other product (e.g. a detergent) to chlorine bleach solutions.
- Prepare disinfectant solution every day. At the end of each day, dispose of any unused solution.

5. Storage of chlorine bleach disinfectant solutions

- Store in air-tight non-metallic containers, away from heat, light and humidity in a well-ventilated area.
- Carefully close containers after use (if containers are not closed properly, the percentage of chlorine of product may decrease).
- Never place the product in contact with acid, fuel, detergents, organic or inflammable materials (e.g. food, paper or cigarettes),
- Never mix with any other disinfecting solutions (risk of toxic gas or explosion).

WASH in Schools



SOP 2a: Handwashing and hygiene procedures: for school management and teachers

Process

1. Promote and demonstrate regular handwashing and positive hygiene behaviors and monitor student practices. See detailed procedures in SOP 3b below.
2. Post handwashing and hygiene posters near handwashing stations and other conspicuous places.
3. Make sure that soap and safe water is available at age-appropriate hand washing stations.
4. Place handwashing stations at the entrance(s) to the school, near toilets (if sinks are not available) and near the cafeteria
5. If possible, place hand sanitizer in every classroom.
6. Place covered trash bins in classrooms, common areas and near handwashing facilities.
7. Make sure trash bins are emptied daily and trash disposed of safely. Trash bins should also be cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis.



SOP 2b: Everything you need to know about washing your hands to protect against coronavirus (COVID-19)⁵: for children, parents and staff

Process

1. How do I wash my hands properly?

Step 1: Wet hands with running water

Step 2: Apply enough soap to cover wet hands

Step 3: Scrub all surfaces of your hands – including back of hands, between fingers and under nails – for at least 20 seconds.

Step 4: Rinse thoroughly with running water

Step 5: Dry hands with a clean cloth or single-use towel if the clean cloth option is maintained, children/staff will need to bring their own clean clothes to school. They should not share with others.

Step 6: Dispose of the paper towel in a waste bin.

2. For how long should I wash my hands?

Wash your hands for at least 20-30 seconds. An easy way to time it is by reciting the *Surah Fateha* or singing the full happy birthday song, twice.

The same goes for hand sanitizer: use a sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol and rub it into your

⁵ Adapted from UNICEF global guidelines available at <https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/everything-you-need-knowhttps://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/everything-you-need-know-about-washing-your-hands-protect-against-coronavirus-covid-19about-washing-your-hands-protect-against-coronavirus-covid-19>

hands for at least 20 seconds to ensure full coverage.

3. When should I wash my hands?

In the context of COVID-19 prevention, you should make sure to wash your hands at the following times:

- After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- After arriving at school
- After touching common surfaces (something other than your own things and your own desk) ✓ In general, you should always wash your hands at the following times: ✓ After using the toilet
- Before and after eating
- After handling garbage
- When your hands are visibly dirty

4. Do I need to use warm water to wash my hands?

No, you can use any temperature of water to wash your hands. Cold water and warm water are equally effective at killing germs and viruses – as long as you use soap!

5. Do I need to dry my hands with a towel?

Germs spread more easily from wet skin than from dry skin, so drying your hands completely is an important step. Paper towels or clean cloths are the most effective way to remove germs without spreading them to other surfaces. If cloths are used, each child and each staff member should bring their own clean cloth to school with them.

6. Which is better: washing your hands or using hand sanitizer?

In general, both handwashing with soap and water and hand sanitizer, when practiced/used correctly, are highly effective at killing most germs and pathogens. Hand sanitizer is often more convenient when you are outside of the home, but can be expensive or difficult to find in emergency contexts. Also, alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol-based) kills the coronavirus, but it does not kill all kinds of bacteria and viruses. For example, it is relatively ineffective against the norovirus and rotavirus.

7. What if I don't have soap?

Using chlorinated water or hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 per cent alcohol are the best second options if you do not have soap and running water. In cases where these are not available, using soapy water or ash may help remove bacteria, though not as effectively. If these methods are used, it is important to wash your hands as soon as possible when you do have access to handwashing facilities, and avoid contact with people and surfaces in the meantime.

8. How else can I help stop the spread of the coronavirus?

- Use proper sneezing and coughing etiquette: Cover your mouth and nose with a flexed elbow or tissue when coughing or sneezing, dispose of used tissue immediately, and wash your hands.
- Avoid touching your face (mouth, nose, eyes).
- Practice social distancing: Avoiding shaking hands, hugging or kissing people, sharing food, utensils, cups and towels.
- Avoid close contact with anyone who has cold or flu-like symptoms.
- Seek medical care early if you or your child has a fever, cough or difficulty breathing
- Clean surfaces that might have come in touch with the virus, and generally clean surfaces more frequently (especially in public spaces).

Social Distancing Requirements



SOP 3: Social Distancing in Schools

For: School Management and Teachers

Process

1. Determine how many children can be accommodated in the school at one time based on social distancing requirements.
 - a. Measure the size of all available learning spaces in your school – how many students can be accommodated in each space based on a required physical distance of 6 feet between each student and between the students and the teacher?
 - b. After determining the number of children who can safely be accommodated in each classroom, split students of ECE/Kachi, Primary, Middle, High and Higher Secondary) into the required number of shifts.
 - c. Determine how many teachers will be available at the school. If some teachers will not return due to age or pre-existing health conditions, this will have an impact on how many children can be accommodated in the school at one time.
 - d. Determine how to organize physical schooling for all the children.
 - **Option 1: Sufficient space to meet social distancing requirements:** Assign each group to a classroom/learning space and teacher.
 - **Option 2: All children can be safely accommodated in two shifts:** Determine which groups of children will be part of shift 1 and which part of shift 2. Assign a teacher to each group of students. Determine the timing of the two shifts and a rotation schedule. Stretching out the school hours between early morning and late afternoon will help manage staggered start and end times to avoid large gatherings. To mitigate the risk of the second shift getting a lesser quality of teaching time (the teacher might be exhausted and not able to give as much attention or reduce the length of sessions etc.), shifts should be rotated regularly. For example, the group of students studying in the morning during one week would study in the afternoon during the next week and vice versa. *Such guidance or protocols will be provided by provincial authorities as per the need.*
 - **Option 3: All children cannot be safely accommodated in two shifts:** Determine how many shifts are needed. Then decide which day/days each shift will physically attend school and during which time periods. Assign a teacher to each group of students.
 - If option 2 or 3 is needed, instruct teachers that Saturday will be a working day till the pandemic is over. Other options could be explored as per the situation.
2. Consult with community members/parents regarding decisions on schooling arrangements and to get their support for flexible operational/academic plans and students' attendance etc.
3. If applicable, determine how many teachers can safely be in the staff room at one time to also respect social distancing requirements. Communicate the limit to teachers.
4. Prepare a floor map of your school and illustrate the movement plan to be followed by students. Display the plan in prominent places in the corridors.

5. Inform teachers of social distancing requirements:
 - a. Before school reopens, ask teachers to arrange classroom furniture so it is properly placed with adequate distance between students.
 - b. Instruct teachers to enforce social distancing among students and that teachers are also expected to maintain social distance – with students and with other teachers.
6. Inform students and parents of social distancing requirements:
 - a. Students are always to maintain at least 6 feet from others inside and outside the classrooms/schools.
 - b. Students to avoid gathering in groups during the day.
 - c. Upon arrival at school, students will undergo a temperature check and health screening. While waiting at the control point, children are to stay on marked spaces 1-2 metres apart from one another.
 - d. School officials should mark the control point area to indicate where children should stand while waiting.
 - e. Students are not allowed to share their belongings with each other, including their stationery items, books, water bottles, lunch etc. Therefore, students must bring all their required items each day.

Social Distancing Requirements



SOP 4: Transportation to and from school

For: School Management

Process

1. Inform drivers, parents, and children of the rules for transportation to and from school. (See below.)
2. Encourage students who live nearby to either walk with an adult or cycle to school.
3. Monitor to make sure procedures are followed.

Procedures for bus or van drivers and parents (as per the department's instructions)

- The bus/van drivers must follow hygiene rules and try to keep distance from students/ staff and ensure that students/teachers are seated at a safe distance and the bus/van is not over crowded.
- All parents/ van drivers must strictly follow the route map shared by the schools
- Parents/van drivers to drop the children and pick them at the designated to location. This must be done to avoid gathering of individuals at any gate and must be strictly followed.
- The van driver must not work if he or a member of his household is carrying any symptoms of COVID-19.
- Van drivers must wait in the school vicinity for a reasonable time so that all students may get screened for body temperature at the school gate to allow entry in the school.
- Van driver must wait until all children have been screened outside the gate and have entered the school. In case a child is identified with increased body temperature, the van driver may need to take the child back home after the parents have been notified.

Procedures for transport staff of SpEd. (conductors and drivers)

- Bus drivers/conductors are advised to screen the students for Covid-19 symptoms through thermal gun. If body temperature of a special student is 37°C or higher, then do not let the student come in the bus and guide the parents and guardians to take him/her to the health centre.
- Ensure that students have a water bottle/glass provided by their parents.
- Drivers/conductors will maintain the physical distance (6 feet) inside the bus, with the students and among the students. To ensure the physical distance in the transport, for each two-seater, one seat will be left vacant.
- Hand sanitization of the student before riding the bus and ensure the personal hygiene measures.
- Preference in the Pick & Drop will be given to the students coming from longer distance.

**SOP 5: Health Screening Control Point, SpEd.****For: Management of Institution****Process**

1. Set up a control point for health screening (or multiple control points depending on the size of the school).
2. Acquire needed supplies for the gate(s): no touch thermometers, face masks and gloves for temperature screeners, something to make markings on the ground to indicate physical distance to be maintained while waiting.
3. Instruct staff, students, parents, and van drivers that everyone will be required to pass through the gate for a temperature check before entering the school. This procedure applies to students as well as teachers, other staff and any visitors who are admitted. (Note: visitors will be allowed only in unavoidable circumstances on due identification.)
4. Place markings on the ground outside the gate that indicate where students will stand while waiting. The markings should be 6 feet apart.
5. Inform chowkidars of their responsibility to check temperatures and maintain social distancing at the gate.
6. Children will pass through the gate one by one and keep distance from each other during the process.
7. Screeners should wear face masks and gloves.
8. Screeners will check each student's temperature with a no touch thermometer.
9. In case the temperature is above 37°C, students, teachers and others will not be allowed to enter the school at all.
10. Students with an elevated temperature or exhibiting other signs of illness such as extreme coughing must immediately return home. Hence, parents or van drivers must wait for children to be screened. Communicate with van drivers to make sure they do not leave the school vicinity until all students have entered the school disinfectant gate.
11. Instruct all students, teachers and staff that wearing a face mask is mandatory for all during school timings.

**SOP 6: What to do if a child or staff member becomes ill during the day****For: School Management and Teachers****Process****1. Before schools reopen**

- a. Identify a space to temporarily separate sick students and staff without creating stigma and where they can rest until someone can pick them up
- b. Identify a school health focal point (depending on the size of the school, this might be the head teacher, another designated teacher or a school nurse or health officer) and community their responsibilities
- c. Update contact information for all parents.
- d. Ask parents to designate an emergency contact in case the parent cannot be reached during when called.
- e. Keep a file of all parent and emergency contact information for each child, as well as emergency contact information for staff members.
- f. Communicate procedures for releasing unwell students, i.e. children will only be released in the care of a parent or authorized emergency contact.

2. After schools open

- a. If a student is not well during the school day, the teacher should accompany him/her to the designated safe place.
- b. Designated health focal point other designated person contacts parent or authorized emergency contact to pick child up from school.
- c. The designated health focal point or another responsible adult should remain with the student until a parent or approved emergency contact arrives.

Social Distancing Requirements



SOP 7a: What to do if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 among School Community: for School Management

Process

BEFORE SCHOOLS REOPEN: Identify cooperative/support teachers who can be called on in case a teacher falls sick after schools reopen. Confirm that you have their current contact information.

AFTER SCHOOLS REOPEN:

If a student, teacher, staff member or household family member has COVID-19, then:

Provincial guidance is needed-what is the procedure that schools will be expected to follow? Will schools temporarily close? If so, for how long? Possible items are included as examples.

1. Instruct the affected individuals not to return to school while they are sick and for two weeks after they recover. People to inform include:
 - Parents and children (in the case of a child with COVID-19 or where another household member has COVID-19)
 - Staff member (who either has COVID-19 or has a household member with COVID-19)
2. Notify parents that school will be closed for as many no. of days to clean and disinfect the school. (Ideally the school should be closed for 24 hours before cleaning and disinfection. After disinfection it can be opened the next day – unless the province decides that the students, teachers and staff members should quarantine for 14 days.)
3. Suggest that, if possible, parents may want to quarantine their households for two weeks until they know they are not infected.
4. Notify health district officials, district education officials and others that there is someone within the direct school community who has contracted COVID-19.
5. Instruct teachers to prepare assignments for children to complete during the days that school will be closed. Refer to Learning Continuity Plan.
6. Notify all parents, staff and children that school will be closed for as many number of days.
7. Supervise cleaning and disinfection of school. Remain outside while school is disinfected. Make sure that the school is well-ventilated after the disinfection process. (Note: school cleaners to follow SOP 1b on cleaning and disinfection of the school.)



Process

Provincial Guidance for Staff:

1. If you are feeling unwell:

- Stay home. Do not come to school.
- Notify the school head/principal.
- If you suspect COVID-19 or test positive for COVID-19, your main job is to recover. After you recover, you should remain home for 14 days before returning to school or as per the guidelines.

2. If you have a household, family member with COVID-19 (or have been in direct contact with a family member or someone else in the community who has come down with COVID-19):

- Inform the school head/principal immediately.
- Isolate yourself as much as possible from your affected family member. Wear a mask if you deliver food or medicine and make sure to wash your hands frequently and for at least 20 seconds each time.
- Follow recommended procedures for cleaning and disinfecting your house, especially surfaces and bathroom areas.
- Quarantine yourself and remain home from school for at least two weeks after recovery of the COVID-19 infected family member (or for two weeks following exposure to an infected person). The time you stay home may be extended if you or someone else in your household becomes infected.
- Check with your school principal to see if there is a need for you to assist with distance learning activities for your students or how you can assist the substitute teacher who is working with your class(es). You may be able to support through reviewing assignments for example or by providing lesson plans or advice to the substitute teacher.

3. If a student is infected with COVID-19 or has been in direct contact with a family member who has COVID-19:

- Inform the head teacher/principal.
- Find out whether the school and/or your class will be temporarily closed and for how long.
- Prepare assignments that children can do from home while the school is temporarily closed.
- Verify that you have the correct contact information for all your students in case you need to follow up with them while the school is closed.
- Clearly communicate to the other children in your class what has happened. Express concern for the child who is ill or whose family member is ill. Stress that it is not their fault and that we all want them to recover quickly.
- Remind the children about proper hygiene procedures and ask them to be role models for their families: frequently washing hands, social distancing and wearing a mask when out of their house.
- Give children clear instructions for the assignments they should complete while at home. Ask them to take their school materials home so they can complete their work. They should bring their completed work to class once school reopens.

Health and other IPC



SOP 8: Guidelines/referral procedures for mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS)

For: District Education Officials and School Management

Process

GUIDELINES for PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT OFFICES

1. Conduct mapping of MHPSS service providers in the school area or close by and ensure services are available to the school.
2. Check that linkages and referral mechanisms of children are in place with Social Welfare Department or MHPSS section of Health Department and Punjab Mental Health Authority for Specialized/individual MHPSS when needed
3. Establish or ensure linkages with child protection case management and referral systems and response mechanism addressing violence and abuse of children. Punjab Child Protection Authority has a Child Protection Unit in all the districts of Punjab. The capacity of these units on case management & referral will be undertaken by SWD with technical support of UNICEF.
4. Establish mechanisms for referral of teachers and school workers to specialized MHPSS services available when needed. Inform teachers and school workers of the availability of these services.
5. Distribute phone support service helpline number 1121 to all children and staff in the school. This helpline can be used to report the cases of violence and abuse against children.
6. Develop a mechanism for students and staff to report violence with complete confidentiality. Establish a peer support mechanism in the school as well. For example, senior students can support junior students. Peers can be among students and teachers as well. Any case of corporal punishment can also be reported without any fear of retaliation. Inform students and staff of these mechanisms.



Process

- Provide training or orientation sessions with teachers and parents before school reopening to share key messages about MHPSS and stigma prevention.
- Engage School Management council (SMC) in communicating key messages about MHPSS and stigma prevention to parents and other community members.
- Encourage children to discuss their questions and concerns. Explain it is normal that they may experience different reactions and encourage them to talk to their teachers and parents if they have any questions or concerns. Provide information in an honest, age-appropriate manner. Guide children on how to support their peers and prevent exclusion and bullying.
- Recognize that children may respond to stress in different ways. Common responses include:
 - having difficulties sleeping
 - bedwetting
 - having pain in the stomach or head
 - and being anxious
 - withdrawn
 - angry
 - clingy or afraid to be left alone.
- Recognize that children rely on adults for guidance on how to react to stressful events. Children will react to and follow verbal and nonverbal reactions. What parents and teachers say and do about the coronavirus pandemic, current prevention efforts, and related events can either increase or decrease children's anxiety. If adults, including teachers, seem overly worried, children's anxiety may rise.
- Teach children positive preventive measures (such as washing hands and wearing masks), talk with them about their fears, and give them a sense of some control over their risk of infection. This can help reduce their anxiety.
- Children may need extra attention and may want to talk about their concerns, fears, and questions. Encourage them to ask questions, listen to them and reassure them. Make time for them. In the absence of information, children often imagine situations far worse than reality.
- If children require additional psychosocial support after the above, please help families call the
- helpline in your area or call for specialized psychosocial services.
- Communicate key messages to parents about how they can help their children psychologically navigate COVID-19.

- Identify a few trusted sources of health and psychosocial support information and only rely on them for information. Government, WHO and UNICEF are recommended sources.
- Hold a family discussion and encourage family members to ask questions from you or one who is most respected and trusted in the family.
- Consider having a separate discussion with young children in order to use language they can understand and to address specific fears or misconceptions they may have.
- Reassure children that many people including health officials and are working hard to ensure that people in the country stay safe and healthy.
- Remain calm and reassuring anytime you speak with them.
- Let your children talk about their feelings and help reframe their concerns into the appropriate perspective.
- Make yourself available if children need to talk. This will help reduce their anxieties.
- Avoid stereotyping any one group of people as responsible for the virus.
- Engage children in games or other interesting activities. Encourage them to play sports and engage in physical activity in a safe manner (i.e. engage in activities that do not require a lot of close contact and thorough handwashing after activities). Maintain a normal routine to the extent possible.
- Encourage your children to keep up with their schoolwork and extracurricular activities, but don't push them if they seem overwhelmed. Don't ignore their concerns, but rather explain that now very few people in this country are sick with coronavirus
- Respond to children's reactions in a supportive way and explain to them that they are normal reactions to an abnormal situation.
- Listen to their concerns and take time to comfort them and give them affection; reassure them they're safe and praise them frequently.
- If possible, create opportunities for children to play and relax.
- Keep regular routines and schedules as much as possible, especially before they go to sleep, or help create new ones in a new environment.
- Provide age-appropriate facts about what has happened, explain what is going on and give children clear examples on what they can do to help protect themselves and others from infection.
- Share information about what could happen in a reassuring way. For example, if your child is feeling sick and staying at home or the hospital, you could say, "You have to stay at home/at the hospital because it is safer for you and your friends. I know it is hard (maybe scary or even boring) at times, but we need to follow the rules to keep ourselves and others safe. Things will go back to normal soon."
- Have the contact number for specialized psychosocial support services displayed in a place where everyone can see it. Use it to access direct service if needed.

**SOP 10: Preventing Stigma and Discrimination****For: School Management and Teachers****Process**

1. Take care to avoid stigmatizing students and staff who may have been exposed to the virus. It is important to remember that COVID-19 does not differentiate between borders, ethnicities, disability status, age or gender. Therefore, encourage students to prevent and address stigma.
2. Please know that:
 - Contracting the virus does not mean it's our/anybody's fault or we/they did something wrong. It is a contagious disease, and anyone can get it.
 - A person who is affected by COVID should not be socially boycotted. Rather this is the time when the person needs the most emotional support to fight the illness and get better. Even if we can't ensure physical presence for extending emotional support, remember that our loved ones are only a text message or call away.
 - Contracting the disease does not mean that the person will die. Most people recover.
 - It is important to stay home and take necessary precautions to protect our families and loved ones if one is unwell.
3. Help spread messages to prevent and address stigma associated with COVID-19:
 - Be kind with and do not stigmatize people with COVID-19. This virus is highly contagious, and anyone can be infected, including you.
 - Avoid blaming others for spreading the virus. When tensions are high, sometimes we try to blame someone. The virus does not discriminate and target any individual or ethnic group.
 - Words matter and using language that perpetuates existing stereotypes can drive people away from getting tested and taking the actions they need to protect themselves and their communities, which is extremely risky for everyone.
 - Avoid stereotyping any one group of people as responsible for the virus.
 - Let us fight the coronavirus infection together and support the people who are affected with care and understanding

