



PRESS RELEASES

March 19, 2020

Schools and Kindergartens to Re-Open with Enhanced Precautionary Measures

1. Schools and Kindergartens will re-open for Term 2 on 23 March 2020 (Monday) as planned. There will be enhanced precautionary measures to keep our students and staff in schools and preschools safe.

ISSUANCE OF LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR ALL OVERSEAS TRAVEL DURING MARCH HOLIDAYS

2. The Ministry of Education (MOE), the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) and the Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) had earlier advised students, parents and staff to review their travel plans and refrain from travel overseas, in line with the Ministry of Health's (MOH) travel advisories.

3. MOH has announced on 18 March that a 14-day Stay Home Notice (SHN) will be issued to returning Singapore Residents, Long Term Pass holders and short term visitors from all countries, with effect from 20 March 2359hrs.

4. To further protect the education system, MOE, MSF and ECDA will implement additional precautionary measures over and above MOH's measures. As some have travelled overseas during the March school holidays, we will issue a 14-day Leave of Absence (LOA) to students and staff of schools, preschools and student care centres who have returned from overseas on or after 14 March, which is the start of the March school holidays. Day zero of the 14 days will commence from the date of their return to Singapore.

5. This means that affected students and staff must stay away from school, preschool and student care centres for the duration of their SHN or LOA. This will take effect from 20 March. This would better ensure our schools, preschools and student care centres remain a safe environment for our students and staff.

6. Students on LOA, as well as those who have to stay away from school due to quarantine orders or SHN, will all be supported via home-based learning, to enable them to continue with their learning. Parents of school-going children who have questions may approach their respective schools for clarifications. Parents will have to take their own leave should they need to care for their children on LOA or SHN. Employers are encouraged to provide flexible work arrangements for their employees to accommodate such exceptional circumstances.

ENHANCED HYGIENE AND PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES IN SCHOOLS

7. Schools have undergone thorough cleaning during the March holidays. Besides cleaning all frequently used contact points, attention is given to the cleaning of washrooms, ensuring hand soap is always replenished and making sure sanitary fittings such as water taps are in good working condition. Other areas of cleaning include jet washing of floors in canteens and shampooing of carpets.

8. We will also implement the following additional precautionary measures for two weeks when schools re-open:

- i. Suspension of Co-curricular Activities
- ii. Deferment of Singapore Youth Festival Arts Presentation
- iii. Fixed exam-style seating for primary 3 students and above, and fixed group cluster seating for primary 1 and 2 and MOE Kindergarten students
- iv. Wipe-down routine in classrooms
- v. Assigned seating and wipe-down routine in canteens
- vi. Assigned play areas for students to play in reduced group sizes

9. These supplement earlier precautionary measures, such as suspension of large group and communal activities and staggering of recess times in schools. The National School Games will continue to be suspended until the end of June holidays.

10. Preschools will also continue with their precautionary measures to safeguard the health and safety of preschool staff and children:

- i. Health checks and more frequent temperature screening for all staff and students (twice a day for kindergartens; three times a day for childcare centres)
- ii. Restriction of visitors into the preschool. Parents to drop off and pick up their children outside the preschool, with the advice to stand further apart from one another
- iii. Suspension of excursions and field trips to minimise risk of exposing children to large crowds. Daily outdoor play and learning for the children will continue
- iv. Suspension of large group and communal activities such as assemblies and mass celebrations:
 - o Children to proceed directly to classrooms when they arrive in school, where possible
 - o Programmes and activities to be carried out in small groups
 - o Children to have their meals in their classrooms or to stagger meal times
- v. Limit the cross-deployment of staff across centres, where possible

11. MOE, MSF and ECDA understand that there would be families affected by the new LOA requirement. We seek their understanding and cooperation to comply with the LOA in order to ensure the well-being of all students and staff when they return to school. We will continue to monitor the situation closely, and work with schools, preschools, parents and the community to ensure that our schools and preschools remain a safe and secure environment. Schools and preschools will also continue to remind students to practise good personal hygiene and social responsibility.

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