

25 April 2022

Dear Student Care Operators

Revised Measures for Student Care Centres (SCCs) Against COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019)

This circular summarises all relevant measures from all COVID-19 related circulars issued by MSF to-date.

As daily infection numbers have continued to fall and have stabilised, the Multi-Ministry Taskforce (MTF) announced on 22 April 2022 that it will further ease several community measures from 26 April 2022. Please refer to the MTF press release for details: <https://www.moh.gov.sg/news-highlights/details/further-easing-of-community-and-border-measures>.

2 The data from the Ministry of Health (MOH) continues to show that COVID-19 is a mild disease in children¹. Thus, in line with the national transition towards COVID-19 resiliency, we have updated the safe management measures (SMMs) for SCCs from 26 April 2022 to support children's learning and development.

3 Despite the easing of measures, it is important that SCCs continue to remain vigilant, by adhering to the SMMs and following the appropriate health protocols to safeguard the health and safety of children and staff in SCCs. We also need to stay alert and stand ready to respond if new variants surface, or if the public health situation takes a turn for the worse.

COVID-Safe Access

a. Cessation of Workforce Vaccination Measures

4 **From 26 April 2022, the Workforce Vaccination Measures (WVM) implemented by the Ministry of Manpower will be lifted.** Hence, SCC staff and third-party vendors that provide services to the SCC (e.g. supplementary programme providers, school bus drivers) will not be required to be fully vaccinated. The lifting of the requirement for vaccination also applies to face-to-face training, practicums and internships, and supervision of practicums/internships.

5 SCCs which wish to continue implementing vaccination-related instructions for staff and third-party vendors, for workplace health and safety and business continuity reasons, have the flexibility to do so in accordance with employment law.

b. Stepping down TraceTogether (TT) and SafeEntry (SE)

6 **From 26 April 2022, SCCs will no longer require staff and visitors to check in using TT and SE.**

¹ For Omicron, 0.014% of cases aged 0-11 years old had illness requiring oxygen supplementation or ICU care.

c. Cessation of Health Risk Notice (HRN)

7 **Given the improved situation, starting 26 April 2022 MOH will stop issuing HRNs to close contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases.** In line with this, SCCs will cease contact tracing of close contacts within the SCC; and close contacts will not be issued with HRNs. This means that from 26 April 2022:

- a. SCCs no longer need to identify the close contacts of an infected staff/ child.
- b. Staff/children who are close contacts of a confirmed case may return to SCC. SCCs no longer need to ask staff/children, who are close contacts of a confirmed case, to produce proof of a negative Antigen Rapid Test (ART) result.

8 SCCs should continue to encourage staff and children to self-test when they feel unwell or have recent contact with an infected person, and follow prevailing health protocols if they test positive. SCCs should continue to allow their employees to rest at home if they test positive for COVID-19, without the need for a medical certificate or recovery memo.

d. Visitor management

9 **From 26 April 2022, all visitors entering the SCC will not be required to be fully vaccinated.** However, SCCs shall continue to restrict casual visitors to minimise the risk of community transmission.

10 To better support children's learning and development, **from 26 April 2022, the following additional groups of visitors may be allowed to enter the SCC premises during operational hours:**

- a. External speakers
- b. Parents attending parent-teacher conferences
- c. Parents supporting centre programmes as volunteers
- d. Parents who are prospective service users who wish to tour the centre premises

11 SCCs shall continue to perform health and temperature checks on visitors and ensure they are masked at all times. SCCs should exercise good judgement and avoid overcrowding in the classrooms (e.g. by scheduling time slots for visitors).

e. Health checks and temperature screening

12 **From 26 April 2022, SCCs are required to conduct temperature screening and health checks for all children, staff and visitors only during arrival.**

COVID-Safe Behaviour

a. Wearing of masks in SCCs

13 All staff shall continue to wear masks in the SCC. However, **from 26 April 2022, SCC staff will be allowed to remove their masks when (a) they are not interacting physically with others, and (b) they are in an area not accessible to children (e.g. staff lounge/pantry).** SCC staff are advised to exercise social responsibility and maintain an appropriate safe distance from others while unmasked.

b. Safe distancing

14 **From 26 April 2022, safe distancing between children and staff/visitors will no longer be required.** However, SCCs should exercise good judgement and avoid overcrowding in the classrooms.

c. Outdoor activities

15 **From 26 April 2022, the group size limit during outdoor vigorous gross motor activities will be removed,** but the following SMMs will still apply:

- a. Mask-wearing is optional in outdoor settings. However, staff and children are encouraged to wear a mask in crowded outdoor areas for personal protection.
- b. There should be no mixing between classes/fixed groups when preparing to go out/return from outdoors. Keep classes/fixed groups separate when outdoors.
- c. Staff and children shall practise hand hygiene before and after outdoor activities.

COVID-Safe Classroom

a. Large group activities

16 **From 26 April 2022, SCCs may resume large group and communal activities, e.g. assemblies.** However, children must remain within their respective classes/fixed groups.

17 **From 26 April 2022, SCCs may resume activities conducted at external venues (e.g. field trips, learning journeys),** subject to the following SMMs:

- a. Children should remain within their classes/fixed groups when taking part in such activities.
- b. There should be minimal intermingling between children and members of the public when taking part in activities or programmes at external venues. Children should not be brought to crowded public spaces, which have high traffic/ crowds, as far as possible. Where transport services are arranged for the activity/programme, SCCs must:
 - Encourage each child to wear a mask for personal protection.
 - Ensure that the bus is cleaned and sanitised before children's use.

b. Celebrations (e.g. birthdays, National Day)

18 **From 26 April 2022, SCCs may conduct celebrations (e.g. birthdays, National Day) in their classes/fixed groups,** subject to the following SMMs:

- a. Children must remain within their respective classes/fixed groups; there must be no mixing of different classes/fixed groups.
- b. External guests remain disallowed (e.g. parents cannot attend the celebration).
- c. If there are birthday cakes, there must be no blowing of candles.

Conclusion

19 Please share the above information with your staff. The latest revisions to the SMMs have been incorporated into Annex A. If you need further assistance, please contact your respective Student Care Officer (SCO). **School-based SCCs are to refer to the advisories issued by MOE and/or school administration for more details.**

20 We will continue to review the safe management measures in SCCs and update SCCs of any further developments.

21 **We wish to remind SCCs to remain vigilant and adhere strictly to the SMMs.** Let us continue to work together as a community to keep SCCs safe for everyone and enable our children to learn and thrive.

Yours faithfully

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[UPDATED] Safe Management Measures (SMMs) for COVID-Safe SCCs: COVID-Safe ABCs

From 26 April 2022, SCCs are only required to adhere to the following SMMs. SCCs must ensure that the SMMs are clearly communicated to staff, and implemented well and consistently. MSF will not hesitate to take enforcement actions for any breaches observed.

<p>COVID-Safe Access</p>	<p>a. Health protocols</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ SCC staff and children who are COVID-19 cases and close contacts of COVID-19 cases shall adhere to prevailing national health protocols. Please refer to <u>Annex B</u> for details. ☑ SCCs shall conduct temperature screening and health checks for all children, staff and visitors during arrival. Staff/children/visitors who are unwell, regardless of PCR/ART result, will not be allowed to enter the centre unless they have recovered fully (i.e. no symptoms). ☑ Children who report feeling unwell must be immediately isolated in the sick bay, and their parents/ guardians notified to bring them home as soon as possible. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There should be no more than one unwell child in each sick bay. If there is more than one unwell child in the sick bay, the children should be spaced 2 metres or more apart and be given masks to wear. - The sick bay must be sanitised and wiped down frequently, especially after every use.
	<p>b. Visitor restrictions in SCCs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ SCCs shall not allow visitors who are on Protocol 1 and 2 or Stay-Home Notice (SHN) to enter the premises. ☑ SCCs shall restrict casual visitors to minimise the risk of community transmission. Only visitors who are needed to support the running of SCCs (e.g. contractors) and those who need to perform necessary functions (e.g. MSF officers, auditors, external speakers) may enter the premises. ☑ From 26 April 2022, parents may enter the SCC premises during operational hours for the following purposes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accompany newly enrolled children for up to half a day for the first 2 days of SCC. A different parent may accompany the child on separate days, if necessary. SCCs may exercise flexibility and allow more time for parents of children with additional needs (e.g. children with special needs), who may need a longer period for adjustment. - Attend parent-teacher conferences - Support centre programmes as volunteers

	<p>- Tour centre premises as prospective service users</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ While there are no safe distancing or capacity limits for visitors, SCCs should exercise good judgement and avoid overcrowding in the classrooms (e.g. by scheduling time slots for visitors). ☑ To minimise casual visitors, SCCs should designate a ‘drop-off point’ outside the SCC for deliveries by vendors and ensure proper sanitisation and wiping down of all goods and items that are delivered.
	<p>c. Health and travel declarations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ With the evolving COVID-19 situation, SCCs should monitor the health and travel plans of staff and children to all countries closely. SCCs shall inform staff and parents to declare the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Of any intended/ updated travel plans by enrolled children or staff to other countries (including the city(s) of travel) - When an enrolled child or staff or any household member has tested positive for COVID-19 (either ART or PCR) - When an enrolled child or staff is issued with Stay Home Notice
<p>COVID-Safe Behaviour</p>	<p>a. Wearing of masks in SCCs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ All SCC staff shall wear masks in the SCC. ☑ From 26 April 2022, SCC staff will be allowed to remove their masks: (a) when they are not interacting physically with others, and (b) when they are in an area not accessible to children (e.g. staff lounge/ pantry). Staff should be encouraged to exercise social responsibility and maintain an appropriate safe distance from others while unmasked. ☑ All SCC children are required to wear masks in the SCC. As some children may have difficulties wearing a mask (e.g. those with special needs), SCCs can exercise some flexibility. SCCs should engage parents for them to provide masks for their children to wear in the SCC. ☑ There may be times during the day where it is not practical nor safe for children to wear masks (e.g. during meals, nap time, vigorous activities). <p>b. Practise high levels of personal hygiene</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ All staff and children shall maintain good personal hygiene practices by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Covering their mouth and nose with a tissue when sneezing or coughing, and to throw away the tissue immediately into a foot-pedal bin.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Washing their hands especially before eating or handling food, after toilet visits, or when hands are dirtied by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing. - Not sharing food/ drinks, eating utensils, toothbrushes or towels with others. - Avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth. <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SCCs should continue to limit showering for children on a need-to basis (due to soiling or medically-certified skin conditions) to minimise transmission risks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shower such children individually. - Rinse shower/contact areas carefully after each use. <p>c. Ensure high levels of environmental hygiene</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SCCs shall ensure high levels of environmental hygiene by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carrying out cleaning and housekeeping <u>daily</u>. - Disinfect frequently touched points such as handrails and door knobs with disinfectant <u>at least twice a day</u>. - Clean and disinfect the tables, chairs, counter tops and shelves in the classrooms/bays, dining and activity areas with disinfectant <u>daily</u>. <p>d. Ensure good ventilation in SCC premises</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SCCs must ensure that their indoor premises are adequately ventilated in line with the guidelines issued by BCA, NEA and MOH (https://www1.bca.gov.sg/docs/default-source/docs-corp-news-and-publications/circulars/bca-nea-moh-guidance-note-on-improving-ventilation-and-indoor-air-quality-in-buildings-amid-the-covid19-situation.pdf).</p>
<p>COVID-Safe Classroom</p>	<p>a. Segregate children by classes/fixed groups (i.e. by bay or level)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keep children within their own classes/fixed groups (i.e. by bay or level)². Ensure there is no mixing of children from different classes/fixed groups for all programmes and activities (including outdoor activities, excursions, learning journeys, celebrations).</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure that children do not interact with children from different classes/fixed groups along walkways, corridors or common spaces, where reasonably practicable to do so.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stagger classes/fixed groups in their use of common areas and facilities (e.g. toilets, halls, common areas) to avoid mixing between classes/fixed groups, with scheduled cleaning in between use as far as possible.</p>

² SCCs that are impacted by significant staff absenteeism (more than 20%) may combine cohorts, where necessary, for the affected period. As grouping of children is a key SMM to minimise transmission risk, SCCs should explore other options first and ease grouping arrangement for children only as a last resort, and for a limited period.

	<p>b. Celebration (e.g. birthdays, National Day)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SCCs may conduct celebrations (e.g. birthdays, National Day) within their classes/fixed groups, subject to the following SMMs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Children must remain within their respective classes/fixed groups; there must be no mixing of different classes/fixed groups.- External guests remain disallowed (e.g. parents must not be invited to attend the celebration).- If there are birthday cakes, there must be no blowing of candles.
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[Updated] Health protocols for SCC staff/ children

	If SCC staff/child ...	If SCC staff/child's household member(s) ...
Protocol 1: Is unwell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff/child should see a doctor for medical advice. <p><u>For low-risk individuals with mild symptoms (e.g. fever, cough, sore throat, etc)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Primary care doctor will administer ART. - If positive, refer to Protocol 2. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff/ parents are to inform SCC that staff/ child has tested positive for COVID-19. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff/child may return to SCC • Notwithstanding this, staff/child is advised to exercise social responsibility and to closely monitor their health and self-test before leaving their house.
Protocol 2: Is well and tested positive, or condition assessed to be mild by a doctor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff/child to self-isolate at home for at least 72 hours³. After 72 hours, he/she may return to SCC if second ART is negative and individual is well. • Those who continue to test ART positive to continue to self-isolate and self-test daily until: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - they obtain a negative ART result; OR - Day 7, 12pm (for vaccinated individuals and children below 12 years old) - No discharge/recovery memo required. • The staff/ parents are to inform SCC that staff/ child has tested positive for COVID-19. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff/child may return to SCC. • Notwithstanding this, staff/child is advised to exercise social responsibility and to closely monitor their health and self-test before leaving their house.
Protocol 3: If identified as a close contact of an infected person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff/child may return to SCC. • Notwithstanding this, staff/child is advised to exercise social responsibility and to closely monitor their health and self-test before leaving their house. • The staff/ parents are to inform SCC that staff/ child has had recent contact with an infected person. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff/child may continue to attend SCC. • SCCs are to be more vigilant in their health checks.

³ MOH recommends the following individuals who test positive to see a doctor even if they are feeling well: a. Persons aged 70 years and above; b. Aged below 12 months; d. Had an organ transplant surgery in the past; e. Have any disease or are taking any medication that weakens the immune system; f. Have been diagnosed with cancer before; g. Are on dialysis; h. Are diagnosed with HIV or AIDS; i. Have a disease affecting your heart, lungs, kidneys, liver, or brain that required hospital admission in the last 6 months; j. Are pregnant; k. Are less than 12 years old and have any congenital condition or growth disorder that affects the heart, lungs or brain; or l. Are less than 12 years old and have Diabetes Mellitus or hypertension.

	If SCC staff/child ...	If SCC staff/child's household member(s) ...
Is unwell and tests negative for COVID-19 <i>(with fever and/ or flu-like symptoms such as cough, runny nose, sore throat, shortness of breath)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff/child may return to SCC only when fully recovered (i.e. no longer displaying symptoms). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCCs are to be more vigilant in their health checks.
Issued with SHN in line with ICA's prevailing requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff/child may return to SCC after the SHN duration has ended. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCCs are to be more vigilant in their health checks.