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24 March 2020

To: All Student Care Centres' operators

Enhanced Precautionary Measures for Student Care Centres Against COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019)

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

A. NEW MEASURES

1 Recently, we have seen an increase in the number of Singapore residents returning back to Singapore from overseas who have COVID-19. To better protect our younger children, MOE and MSF/ECDA will implement the following two additional precautionary measures for student care centre and primary school students:

- a. **[NEW] Leave of Absence (LOA) for Student Care Centre children with a household member who has (i) recently returned from any country to Singapore from 25 March 2020, 1159pm or (ii) returned from the UK, US or ASEAN countries¹ on or after 14 March 2020. Details are set out below:**
 - i. Students staying in the same household as a person who has returned from any country to Singapore on and after Wednesday, 25 March 2020, 11.59pm, will be placed on 14-day Leave of Absence (LOA)². This means such students must no longer come to school, preschool and student care centre from Thursday, 26 March
 - ii. Students staying in the same household as a person who had returned to Singapore from the UK, US or ASEAN countries on or after 14 March 2020, will be placed on 14-day LOA³.

¹ List of ASEAN countries: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam.

² The date of return of the household member to Singapore would be considered Day 0. The child may then return to the centre on Day 15.

³ For student care children affected by the LOA and who may be present in the preschool on 25 March 2020, preschools can consider taking additional precautionary measures to minimise the children's interaction with others (e.g. placing the children in a separate area).

This is a precautionary measure to reduce the risk to young children in the Student Care Centre sector. This is because young children may not be able to take the necessary precautions and stay away from household members under Home Quarantine or Stay Home Notice.

b. Support measures for Student Care Centre operators and staff affected by LOA/ SHN

For employees under LOA/ SHN, where flexible work arrangements are not possible, employers are encouraged to provide paid leave for the LOA/ SHN period over and above employees' annual leave entitlements. **Operators can tap on MOM's Leave of Absence Support Programme (LOASP), which aims to help businesses affected by LOA requirements due to COVID-19. Under the LOASP, eligible employers can apply for \$100 daily per affected worker for the required duration of paid LOA or SHN granted to the employee.** For example, the LOASP will only be applicable to Student Care Centre staff who had travelled out of Singapore before the travel restrictions and SHN requirements were announced.

Please refer to the MOM website (www.mom.gov.sg/covid-19/loasp) for more information on eligibility criteria and how to apply.

For staff who still proceeded to travel overseas even after the issuance of MOH's travel advisories, the employer may require the staff to use their own annual leave entitlements to cover the duration of any mandatory SHN (where applicable), Student Care Centre-imposed LOA duration, or any extended period of travel in the destination country. If the staff does not have sufficient annual leave entitlements, the operator may allow the staff to consume advance leave or put the staff on no-pay leave. Employers are reminded to be fair and apply the relevant HR policies to all employees. Please refer to MOM's advisory for more details: <https://www.mom.gov.sg/covid-19/advisory-on-non-essential-travel>

c. Safe distancing measures in Student Care Centres

Student Care Centres are strongly advised to put in place the following safe distancing measures to reduce the risk of local transmission among children and staff within each Student Care Centre. The guidelines on safe distancing measures are in **Annex A** and will take effect from **27 March 2020**. The measures cover safe distancing in the following areas:

- i. At arrival and dismissal
- ii. During Student Care Centre hours
- iii. Further restriction of visitors
- iv. Activities outside of Student Care Centre hours

While Student Care Centres are facing tight staffing due to the HQO, SHN and LOA policies in place, we would like to emphasize that staff who are unwell should not come into the Student Care Centres. If necessary, MSF will look into exercising some flexibility in staff-child ratio requirements for brief periods.

B. UPDATED MEASURES (FROM 24 MARCH 2020)

2 Arising from the new measures at para 1, please see the **[UPDATED]** measures below:

a. Leave of Absence/ Stay-Home Notice

S/N	Precautionary Measures	What Should Student Care Centres Do?	
		For Child	For Staff
1.	Any staff or child who recently returned to Singapore from overseas travel (regardless of country or mode of entry) on or after 14 March 2020 – <i>Student Care Centre will issue LOA to returnees</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant 14-day LOA from date of return to Singapore School-based student care centres should notify the school administration of staff/child on LOA Community-based student care centres should inform MSF of staff/ child on LOA 	
2.	Any staff or child entering Singapore from 20 March 2020, 11.59pm will be issued a 14-day Stay-Home Notice (SHN) – <i>Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA) will issue SHN to all returnees</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff/ Parents of children will be advised by ICA to inform Student Care Centres of SHN issued School-based student care centres should notify the school administration of staff/child on SHN. Community-based student care centres should inform MSF of staff/ child on SHN Monitor affected staff/ child through regular telephone calls 	
3.	Any staff or child who recently returned to Singapore and with travel history to Hubei (including Wuhan) in the last 14 days – <i>MOH to assess and place returnees under Home Quarantine Order (HQO) or in Government Quarantine Facilities (GQF)⁴</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School-based student care centres should inform the school administration of any staff or child placed under Quarantine Order by MOH. Community-based student care centres should notify MSF of such cases. Monitor affected staff/ child through regular telephone calls Staff or child should only return to Student Care Centre after the Quarantine Order expires and if well 	

⁴ Note that information on persons placed under HQO or in GQF must be kept **strictly confidential and disclosed only to persons on a need-to-know basis**. Information should not be disclosed to other children/parents/external parties.

S/N	Precautionary Measures	What Should Student Care Centres Do?	
		For Child	For Staff
4.	<p>[UPDATED] Any child or staff staying with any household member:</p> <p>a. Under Home Quarantine Order (HQO);</p> <p>b. Who has returned from any country to Singapore from Wednesday, 25 March 2020, 11.59pm; or</p> <p>c. Who has returned from the UK, US or ASEAN countries⁵ on or after 14 March 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform all parents to notify Student Care Centre if there is a household member: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Under Home Quarantine Order (HQO); - Who has returned from any country to Singapore from Wednesday, 25 March 2020, 11.59pm; or - Who has returned from the UK, US or ASEAN countries on or after 14 March 2020 • Grant child Leave of Absence, aligned to the period of household member's HQO/ 14 days from date of return to Singapore • Inform the school administration (for school-based centres) or MSF (for community-based centres) of any new LOA given to a child • Monitor affected child through regular telephone calls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform all staff to notify Student Care Centre if there is a household member: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Under Home Quarantine Order (HQO) - Who has returned from any country to Singapore from Wednesday, 25 March 2020, 11.59pm; or - Who has returned from the UK, US or ASEAN countries on or after 14 March 2020 • Student Care Centres can consider these precautionary measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grant Leave of Absence aligned to the period of household member's HQO/ 14 days from date of return to Singapore; or - Redeploy staff to administrative tasks • Inform the school administration (for school-based Centres) or MSF (for community-based Centres) of any LOA given to staff. • Monitor affected staff through regular telephone calls

⁵ List of ASEAN countries: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam.

S/N	Precautionary Measures	What Should Student Care Centres Do?	
		For Child	For Staff
5.	[UPDATED] Any staff or child living with household members issued with a Leave of Absence (LOA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action is required from the Student Care Centre Staff/Child should be allowed to attend Student Care Centre, if well 	

b. Travel Plans and Declarations

With the evolving COVID-19 situation, Student Care Centres are required to monitor the travel plans of staff and children to all countries closely. Student Care Centres should inform staff and parents to declare the following, if not already done:

- i. Of any intended/ updated travel plans by staff or enrolled children to other countries (including the city(s) of travel); and
- ii. When an enrolled child or staff is staying with a household member (i) who is issued with a Home Quarantine Order or (ii) **who returned from any country to Singapore from Wednesday, 25 March 2020, 11.59pm; or (iii) returned from the UK, US or ASEAN countries on or after 14 March 2020 [UPDATED]**

The updated travel and health declaration form for staff/ children at Annex B is for your adaptation and use.

Student Care Centres should require all visitors entering the Student Care Centre to fill in a travel declaration. Parents/Guardians who are at the Student Care Centre to pick up and drop off their child for a short period of time (i.e. < 30 minutes) can be excluded.

C. CONTINUATION OF CURRENT MEASURES (FROM 24 MARCH 2020)

3 Student Care Centres are to continue with the following measures to safeguard the health and safety of Student Care Centre staff and children.

a. Health checks and temperature screening

Student Care Centres are to continue with health checks and temperature screening for all children, staff and visitors. Student Care Centres should not admit children, staff and visitors who are unwell (i.e. have fever and/or flu-like symptoms such as runny nose, cough, shortness of breath). Student Care Centres should increase the frequency of temperature taking for children and staff to twice a day (i.e. during arrival and at dismissal)

* Please note that a child is generally considered to have a fever if the body temperature is above 37.5°C. This depends on the method of temperature taking

and Student Care Centres should check the instruction manual of the thermometer.

b. Restriction of visitors in Student Care Centres

Student Care Centres are to restrict casual visitors to minimise the risk of community transmission. Only visitors who are needed to support the running of Student Care Centres (e.g. enrichment teachers, contractors) and agencies who need to perform necessary functions may enter the premises (e.g. MSF officers). Parents can still drop off and pick up their children.

If it is necessary to have a visitor in the centre, temperature checks and travel declarations should be obtained. Visitors who have travelled overseas within the last 14 days should not be admitted into your centre.

Student Care Centres should also ensure that your visitor log is maintained, in the event of contact tracing. The updated visitor declaration form is at [Annex C](#) for your adaptation and use.

D. GENERAL POINTS FOR NOTING

- 4 We strongly encourage student care centre operators and supervisors to share the information with your staff.
- 5 Student care centres should encourage staff and children to observe good personal hygiene practices, and ensure the premises, equipment, materials and toys are kept clean.
- 6 As the COVID-19 situation may persist for a duration of time, student care centres should use your resources such as surgical masks and sanitizers sensibly, and only when necessary. Only individuals who are recovering from an illness need to wear a mask.
- 7 MSF and the relevant agencies are monitoring the COVID-19 situation closely and will provide regular updates. As we need to monitor and assess the situation in Student Care Centres, we seek operators' and supervisors' cooperation to provide MSF with an update of staff and children on LOA or SHN by 2pm daily (one submission per person on LOA/SHN) via <https://go.gov.sg/msf-report-loa> or via the QR code below



8 MSF and the relevant agencies are monitoring the COVID-19 situation closely. As the global situation continues to evolve, we will continue to review the measures needed to keep our student care community safe and provide regular updates. Let us continue to work together to safeguard the health and wellbeing of our student care children and staff.

Yours faithfully

Siti Mariam Selamat (Ms)

Senior Assistant Director

Service Delivery and Coordination Division (SDCD)

Ministry of Social and Family Development

SAFE DISTANCING GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT CARE CENTRES

A. Safe distancing at arrival and dismissal

Parents and children should exercise physical distancing at the common areas during pick-up and drop-off

Entry into centre

- Children to proceed directly to classrooms when they arrive in the student care centre and not congregate outside the centre premises, where possible
- Parents/Guardians to not enter the student care premises

Waiting area

- Demarcate queues at health check area and advise parents/guardians to stand at least a metre apart from one another while waiting outside the centre to drop-off or pick up their children, where possible
- Open up/ provide for larger spaces for parents to wait for their children, where possible.
- Staff and children from different classes to use separate entrances/exits, where available

Waiting time

- Parents/Guardians who are at the student care centre to pick up and drop off their child should arrive just before dismissal time, to minimise waiting time, and not to congregate outside the premises for prolonged period.
- Stagger drop-off and pick-up times for classes, as far as possible

Bus services

- For student care centres which engage school bus services –
 - Work with bus companies to take children's temperatures prior to them boarding the bus
 - Assign specific seat to each child

B. Safe distancing during student care centre hours

Student Care Centre should segregate the areas/floors/class in their centres and try to limit movement of children and staff within their own areas as far as possible

Segregated areas/floors/classes

- Keep children and staff within their own areas/floors and not move across different areas/floors throughout the day, where possible
- Keep classes separate from other classes. Consider 'soft barriers' or markers to help with demarcation. Ensure that children do not interact with children from different classes along walkways, corridors or common spaces, where possible
- Staff are not to be cross-deployed across centres/areas, where possible
- Non-teaching staff, e.g. cleaners and administrative staff to refrain from interacting with children, where possible

General activities within class

- Split a larger class into smaller groups for programmes and activities, where possible. Children to remain in their groups and not switch between groups
- Avoid programmes and activities that involve close physical contact among children and staff
- Staff should avoid close physical contact with children, e.g. hugs
- Space out seating arrangements and arrange designated seat for each child

Meals

- Children and staff should have meals in their respective classrooms
- If meals are taken in a common dining space, there should be staggered meal times and no mixing of classes. Surfaces (e.g. tables, chairs) to be cleaned before the commencement of meals for the next class
- Cook/food handler should refrain from interacting with children

Outdoor activities

- Stagger classes to avoid mixing when preparing to go out/return from outdoor
- Keep classes separate during outdoor play
- Wipe down and clean equipment, especially high touch items, between sessions/after each group. Carry out regular cleaning/wash down of equipment.
- Practise hand hygiene before and after outdoor activities

Inter-class activities

- Suspend excursions and field trips that expose children to large crowds
- Suspend large group and communal activities e.g. assemblies, mass celebrations
- Suspend extra-curricular activities and enrichment classes with immediate effect unless the provider can put in place measures to avoid co-mingling e.g. enrichment teacher only teaches the same class within the same centre, and is not deployed to other centres (*to be reviewed in June 2020*)
- Restrict visitors to only those needed to support the running of the student care centre, and agencies who need to perform necessary functions may enter the premises
- Limit birthday celebrations to the class (avoid blowing of candles). Family members not allowed.
- Limit graduation attendance to only the graduating class, and keep the attendance of family members small (1 to 2 persons)

Routine care

- Centres are encouraged to limit showering on a need-to basis (e.g. children who soil themselves or have skin conditions). Continue to ensure children wash hands with soap and water regularly.
- If showering is carried out, centre is to shower children individually. Rinse showers/contact areas carefully after showering each child before use by another child.
- Minimise contact between children of different classes/groups during routine care, where possible
- There should be no more than one unwell child in each sick bay, where possible. If there is more than one unwell child in the sick bay, the children should be spaced 2m or more apart and be given masks to wear, if possible. If staff need to interact closely with the sick children (i.e. <2m from child), they should wear a mask and practice hand hygiene after contact with the child.

Equipment

- Minimise cross-sharing of equipment, materials and toys across classes
- Assign equipment individually if possible e.g. mattress
- Wipe down and clean equipment after each use

Meetings

- Minimise non-essential meetings and staff training, and replace with teleconferencing, emails
- For essential meetings, restrict number of staff to a maximum of 10 pax,
- For essential training, space out training participants so that they are seated at least 1 metre apart and avoid activities that require physical contact of the participants. Replace buffet style meals/snacks with individually packed meals.
- Staff are not to congregate in common areas, such as staff lounge and pantry, for prolonged periods of time

C. Safe distancing of visitors

Limit visits by parents and replace with contactless engagements where possible

Existing parents

- Suspend parent-teacher conferences and substitute with teleconferences or online engagements (eg: video conferencing)

New parents

- Only 1 parent (preferably the same parent) can accompany the new child for a short duration in the first 3 days
- Conduct health checks for the parent prior to entry and obtain his/her travel declaration. Disallow entry if he/she is found to be unwell, or has travel history.
- Limit the parent's contact and movement to the enrolled class only

Prospective parents

- Disallow entry of potential parents during operating hours and substitute with alternatives (eg: virtual tours and photos)

D. Safe distancing outside of student care centre hours

Minimise inter-class activities outside of student care centre

- Encourage parents to defer parties or play groups outside of school
- Advise parents to restrict parties/ play groups to children in the same class, rather than children from other classes

**TRAVEL AND HEALTH DECLARATION FORM
(For Staff/ Child)**

As part of precautionary measures to ensure the health and wellbeing of the children and staff in the student care centre, we seek your cooperation to complete this form and return it to the student care centre if you (a) recently travelled overseas; (b) intend to travel to another country. Please inform the student care centre immediately should there be any change in the status of your declaration. Thank you.

Particulars:

Name:

Contact No.:

Child's name (if applicable):

Child's BC (if applicable):

Please tick accordingly:

1. Did you/ your child recently return from travel overseas?

 Yes

Please state travel period:

Please state country of travel:

 No

2. Do you/ your child have plans to travel overseas in the next 6 months?

 Yes

Please state country/ city/ province.

(For example, China (country)/ Wuhan (city) / Hubei (province); Japan (country)/ Osaka (city):

Please state travel period:

No

3. I/ My child am/ is living with a household member(s) under:

Home Quarantine Order (HQO) issued by the Ministry of Health

Please state HQO period: _____

Recently returned from any country to Singapore from 25 March 2020, 11.59pm

Please state date of return to Singapore: _____

Recently returned from the UK, US or ASEAN countries* on or after 14 March 2020

Please state date of return to Singapore: _____

* List of ASEAN countries: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam.

I, the undersigned, declare the above information to be true.

Name and Signature of Staff/ Parent

Date

**TRAVEL DECLARATION FORM
(For Visitors)**

As part of precautionary measures to ensure the health and wellbeing of the children and staff in the student care centre, we seek your cooperation to complete this form and return it to the student care centre.

Thank you.

Particulars:

Name:

Contact No.:

Please tick accordingly:

4. Did you travel overseas in the last 14 days?

Yes

Please state travel period:

No

We seek your understanding that visitors who have travelled overseas in the last 14 days, regardless of country or mode of entry into Singapore, will not be allowed to enter the student care centre.

I, the undersigned, declare the above information to be true.

Name and Signature

Date

24 March 2020

Dear Parents / Guardians

Keeping Our Children in Student Care Centres Safe Against COVID-19: 14-day Leave of Absence for Student Care Centre Children Staying with a Person who Returned to Singapore from Overseas Travel

New Precautionary Measure

In light of the recent increase in imported cases in Singapore, the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) and Ministry of Education (MOE) will implement the following two additional precautionary measures for Student Care Centre and primary school students to protect our younger children:

- a. **Students staying in the same household as a person who returned from any country to Singapore from Wednesday, 25 March 2020, 11.59pm**, will be placed on 14-day Leave of Absence (LOA). This means such students must not come to school, preschool or student care centre from Thursday, 26 March for the relevant LOA period.
- b. **Students staying in the same household as a person who returned to Singapore from the UK, US or ASEAN countries⁶ on or after 14 March 2020** will be placed on 14-day LOA⁷.

2 These additional measures were taken in view that young children may be less able to abide by good hygiene practices required when staying with persons under quarantine and stay home notice and would need this additional layer of precaution.

Continued Efforts to Keep Student Care Centres Safe

3 These measures are in addition to the earlier announced 14-day LOA issued to students and staff of schools and student care centres if they returned from overseas on or after 14 March. Student Care Centres have also steadily implemented a series of precautionary measures over the past month, in accordance with MSF's advisories. These include increasing the frequency of temperature screening, ensuring personal and

⁶ List of ASEAN countries: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam.

⁷ The date of return of the household member to Singapore would be considered Day 0. The preschool child may then return to the preschool on Day 15.

environmental hygiene practices among children and staff, restricting visitors and suspending large group activities.

4 We seek your understanding that the COVID-19 outbreak around the world is rapidly escalating. It is therefore critical that precautionary measures in schools and Student Care Centres remain responsive, and are stepped up when necessary to protect our children and staff.

5 MSF and MOE will continue to monitor the situation closely and work closely with schools, student care centres, parents and the community to ensure that our schools and student care centres remain safe.

6 We understand that this new measure will cause inconvenience for families. We seek your understanding and cooperation to comply with the LOA to help safeguard the safety and wellbeing of the children and staff in Student Care Centres. The Ministry of Manpower had earlier issued an advisory encouraging all employers to be supportive of their employees' needs if an employee needs to stay at home for non-work related reasons relating to the COVID-19 situation, e.g. take care of children who are unable to report to school or Student Care Centre. Please refer to MOM's advisory for more details: <https://www.mom.gov.sg/covid-19/advisory-for-employers-and-employees-travelling-to-and-from-affected-areas>

7 Families and children receiving Student Care Fee Assistance (SCFA) may be concerned that they would not meet the required minimum 50% attendance at student care, if affected by COVID-19 precautionary measures. To better support families during this period, MSF can waive the attendance requirement for affected families and children. Parents may apply to MSF for such a waiver, through the student care centre, by submitting a scanned copy of the child(ren)'s passport pages showing exit and entry date stamps, together with a copy of the LOA.

Action by Parents

8 Keeping our Student Care Centres safe is a collective effort. **Please inform your child's Student Care Centre if there is a household member who (a) returned from any country to Singapore from Wednesday, 25 March 2020, 11.59pm; or (b) returned to Singapore from the UK, US or ASEAN countries on or after 14 March 2020.** We encourage you to keep your child at home, and to return to centre after the LOA period.

9 Let us continue to work together to protect the well-being of all children and staff of our Student Care community.

Yours faithfully

Siti Mariam Selamat (Ms)

Senior Assistant Director

Service Delivery and Coordination Division (SDCD)

Ministry of Social and Family Development