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8 February 2020

To: All Student Care Centres' operators

Enhanced Precautionary Measures for Student Care Centres (SCCs) Against the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

The Ministry of Health has stepped up their risk assessment from DORSCON Yellow to DORSCON Orange with effect from 7 February 2020. To protect the health and well-being of all children and staff, MSF will further enhance precautionary measures.

UPDATED MEASURES (FROM 8 FEBRUARY 2020)

2 With effect from 8 February, student care centres are to implement the additional measures:

a. 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 Centres (e.g. contractors) and agencies who need to perform necessary functions may enter the premises. If it is necessary to have a visitor in the Centre, temperature checks and travel declarations should be obtained. Visitors who have visited Mainland China within the last 14 days should not be admitted into your Centre. Student Care Centres should also ensure that the visitor log is maintained, in the event of contact tracing. Parents can still drop off and pick up their children.

b. Cross movement of staff

To minimise the risk of transmission between Centres, student care operators should limit the movement of staff across centres, where possible.

CONTINUATION OF CURRENT PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES

3 Student Care Centres are to continue with the current measures to safeguard the health and safety of staff and children. Here is a summary of the precautionary measures for Student Care Centres in response to the novel coronavirus situation.

a. Leave of Absence

S/N	Precautionary Measures	What Should Student Care Centres Do?	
		For Child	For Staff
1	Any staff or child who recently returned from Mainland China - SCCs to place under Leave of Absence (LOA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grant 14-day Leave of Absence (LOA), from date of return to Singapore from Mainland China. ▪ School-based Student Care Centres should notify the school administration of new LOA given. Community-based Student Care Centres should notify MSF of new LOA issued. ▪ Monitor health of affected child/staff. ▪ Refer to FAQs on how to compute period of LOA. <p>Please note that with effect from 4 February 2020, Student Care Centres should request staff and parents to indicate the City/Province in Mainland China that they had travelled / will travel to, as part of the travel declaration. (E.g. Wuhan -City; Hubei – Province)</p>	
2	Any staff or child who recently returned from Hubei (including Wuhan) – MOH to assess and place under Home	<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. ▪ Staff or child should only return to SCC after the Quarantine Order expires and if well. 	

S/N	Precautionary Measures	What Should Student Care Centres Do?	
		For Child	For Staff
	Quarantine Order (HQO) or in Government Quarantine Facilities (GQF) **		
3	Any child or staff living with any household members under Home Quarantine Order (HQO) **	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inform all parents to notify the Student Care Centre if there is a household member under HQO. ▪ Grant the child 14-day Leave of Absence (LOA), from the date of issue of household member's HQO. ▪ Inform the school administration (for school-based Centres) or MSF (for community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform all staff to notify the Student Care Centre if there is a household member under HQO. • Student Care Centres can consider these precautionary measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Redeploy staff to administrative tasks; or - Grant 14-day Leave of Absence (LOA), from the date of issue of household member's HQO. • Immediately inform the school administration (for school-based

S/N	Precautionary Measures	What Should Student Care Centres Do?	
		For Child	For Staff
		<p>-based Centres) of any new LOA given to a child living with a household member under HQO.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitor health of child. 	<p>Centres) or MSF (for community-based Centres) of any staff living with a household member under HQO.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the school administration (for school-based Centres) or MSF (for community-based Centres) of any new LOA given to a staff living with a household member under HQO. • Monitor health of staff.
4	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, if well. 	

S/N	Precautionary Measures	What Should Student Care Centres Do?	
		For Child	For Staff
5	Any staff or child who has recently returned from other countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action is required from the Student Care Centre Staff /Child should be allowed to attend student care, if well. 	

**** 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.**

b. Travel Plans and Declarations

Student Care Centres should inform staff and parents to declare the following:

- i. Of any recent travel history by staff or enrolled children to Mainland China;
- ii. Of any intended travel plans by staff or enrolled children to Mainland China – Ministry of Health advises all travellers to defer all non-essential travel to Mainland China; and
- iii. When a household member of an enrolled child or staff is issued with a Home Quarantine Order

Student Care Centres should require all visitors entering the SCC to fill in a travel declaration. Ensure that visitors have not visited Mainland China within the last 14 days. Parents/Guardians who are at the SCC to pick up and drop off their child for a short period of time (i.e. < 30 minutes) can be excluded.

c. Large group and communal activities

Student Care Centres are to:

- i. Suspend large group and communal activities such as assemblies and mass celebrations. Children should proceed directly to classrooms when they arrive at the Centre.
- ii. Suspend excursions and field trips to minimise risk of exposing children to large crowds. Daily outdoor play and learning can continue.

d. Health checks and temperature screening

Student Care Centres are to continue with health checks and temperature screening for all children, staff and visitors. Centres should increase the frequency of temperature taking for children and staff to twice daily (during arrival and dismissal).

4 We strongly encourage Student Care operators and supervisors to read the list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) in order to guide you in your operations. Please also 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 novel coronavirus 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 novel coronavirus 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 an update of new LOA given to staff and children daily. School-based student care operators are to report their issuance of LOA to the school administration. Community-based centres are to report new cases of LOA to MSF by 2pm daily (one submission per person on LOA) using an e-form at <https://go.gov.sg/msf-report-loa> or access by the following QR code:



Yours faithfully

Denise Low (Ms)
Director (Service Delivery and Coordination Division)
Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF)

**Precautionary Measures Taken by Student Care Centres (SCCs)
2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

1. What is a Leave of Absence?

The 14-day Leave of Absence (LOA) is a precautionary measure for:

- a. student care centre staff and children who are well but have recently travelled to Mainland China; or
- b. to children living with a household member under Home Quarantine Order.

Persons put on a Leave of Absence should stay at home and minimise close contact with others. They should monitor their health closely and seek medical attention if they develop any fever or symptoms of acute respiratory illness such as cough or shortness of breath.

Student care operators and supervisors should maintain good records of all staff and children who are on a Leave of Absence.

2. Why is MSF instituting the 14-day Leave of Absence? Who does it apply to? [UPDATED]

As the Novel Coronavirus situation evolves, MSF is taking precautionary measures to protect the student care community of staff and enrolled children.

As the incubation period for the coronavirus can range from one to 14 days and the virus is infectious during incubation, this Leave of Absence aims to reduce risks to other children and staff.

The Leave of Absence applies to the following:

a. Student care centre staff and children returning from Mainland China

- i. On and from 28 January 2020
- ii. Those who recently returned from 14 to 27 January 2020

b. Student care centre children with any household member issued with a Home Quarantine Order (HQO)

Affected children must not attend student care centre for 14 days from the date of HQO of the household member.

3. Does the Leave of Absence apply retrospectively? I.e. if I travelled to China and returned before 27 Jan 2020?

Yes, the Leave of Absence applies retrospectively as well. Student Care Centre staff and families with enrolled children who recently returned from overseas in the past 14 days from the date when the Leave of Absence was introduced (i.e. from 14 Jan to 27 Jan 2020), should declare their travel plans and history to the student care centre promptly, and follow other instructions from the centre.

4. How do we calculate the 14-day Leave of Absence?

See Figure 1 below: The date of return to Singapore would be considered Day 0. The staff or student may then return to the student care centre on Day 15, provided they are well.

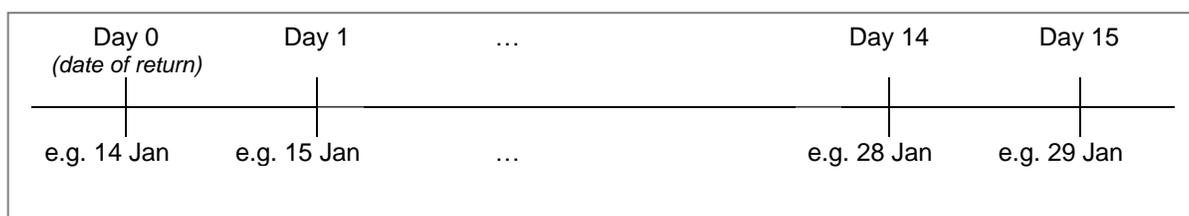
What this means is:

- i. If you return to Singapore from Mainland China on 28 Jan 2020 (Day 0), you may return to the student care centre on 12 Feb 2020 (Day 15), provided you are well.

- ii. If you return to Singapore from Mainland China on 3 Feb 2020 (Day 0), you may return to the student care centre on 18 Feb 2020 (Day 15).

- iii. If you had returned to Singapore from Mainland China on 14 Jan 2020 (Day 0), you may return to the student care centre on 29 Jan 2020 (Day 15).

Figure 1: Worked Example for Leave of Absence



5. Does this apply to persons who have returned from other countries?

No. This Leave of Absence currently only applies to the student care centre staff or enrolled children returning from Mainland China.

6. Does this apply to vendors, enrichment class providers, etc engaged by the student care centre?

No. The LOA applies only to student care centre staff and children. However, student care centres are to ask non-staff who come into close contact with the children to make a travel declaration. Individuals who are unwell should also not be allowed into the centre.

7. Are persons in transit at airports in China excluded from Leave of Absence?

Travellers who transit in an airport in Mainland China are not considered as having travelled to Mainland China. Therefore, staff transiting in airports in China are excluded from this requirement.

8. How long is this new measure expected to last for?

The novel coronavirus situation in China remains dynamic. MSF and relevant agencies are monitoring the situation and will provide further updates. Student care centres should continue to implement the 14-day Leave of Absence for staff and children who have returned from China, until otherwise advised by MSF.

MANAGING AFFECTED STAFF AND CHILDREN

9. What advice can I give my staff who is on Leave of Absence?

They should:

- a. Not report to student care centre during the 14-day period;.
- b. Monitor their health and seek medical attention promptly if feeling unwell;.
- c. Stay at home as far as possible, and minimise visitors and close contact with others;
- d. Avoid going to crowded places and attend social gatherings;
- e. Maintain a record of persons they come into close contact with during the Leave of Absence (LOA);.
- f. Remain contactable at all times.

10. Children who have been placed on a Leave of Absence will miss 2 weeks of student care.

What assistance can student care centres give to support affected children?

Student care centres are encouraged to check in with these children regularly to check on their health and wellbeing. Student care centres are also encouraged to provide home learning resources and materials for these children (where applicable), and work with parents to support their child's learning and development (if tuition and enrichment is part of the centre's programme).

These efforts will help the children to transit back smoothly when they return to student care centre.

11. What if staff or children who are on a Leave of Absence do not stay home, and move around in public areas?

There is a difference between a Leave of Absence (LOA) and Quarantine Order (QO).

A QO is served to individuals who have a higher risk of exposure to the virus, such as someone who has close contact with an infected person. QOs have legal force, with severe penalties for non-compliance. Quarantine usually occurs in the home but can also be served in dedicated Government Quarantine Facilities (GQFs) or hospitals, should the individual not have suitable accommodation in Singapore.

A LOA is issued as a precautionary measure to children and staff who are well. Although LOAs are not legally binding, we strongly urge those on LOA to be socially responsible and comply with the LOA, to prevent possible transmission of infections.

Please note that under the Terms and Conditions for Administrators of Student Care Fee Assistance (SCFA) subsidies, clause 8 states that:

Health and Safety

- a) The Centre shall adhere to the relevant health advisories issued by MSF, Ministry of Health and National Environment Agency and be familiar with and abide by the operating procedures and guidelines in managing health conditions e.g. Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease, flu epidemic etc., and environmental conditions, e.g. haze.

- b) The Centre shall ensure the safety of all students at all times during operating hours.

12. What happens if a parent refuses for a child to take Leave of Absence and insists that the child attends school?

Explain to them that this is a precautionary measure to protect the health and wellbeing of other children and staff in the student care centre. Appeal to parent to exercise social responsibility:

- a. Ensure the child does not report to student care centre during the 14-day period.
- b. Monitor their child's health and seek medical attention promptly if the child is unwell.

13. Some of my staff stay in the same room or flat as those who have just returned from Mainland China. Can they still report for work?

Yes, only student care centre staff who have recently returned or will be returning from Mainland China are required to take a Leave of Absence. Employers should monitor the health of their staff and advise them to keep good personal hygiene and to seek medical attention if unwell.

14. For staff with any household member issued with a Home Quarantine Order (HQO), for example, can student care centres choose to give staff Leave of Absence? [NEW]

Student care centres should notify MSF if you have staff with household members issued with an HQO. Student care centres should monitor the health of the affected staff closely and ensure that the staff observes good personal hygiene practices. The affected staff should monitor their health and seek medical attention if they feel unwell.

Student care centre operators can choose to consider additional precautionary measures such as redeploying the staff to functions that do not involve contact with children, and giving the staff Leave of Absence, if you deem it appropriate for the centre.

15. What if I suspect someone has given a false declaration? Who do I contact?

Student care centre staff and families with enrolled children who have returned from overseas in the past 14 days, should declare their travel plans and travel history to the student care centre promptly and accurately, and follow other instructions from the student care centre.

If you come to know that a staff, parent or child did not submit or had provided inaccurate information in their travel declaration forms, please follow up with the person accordingly to obtain updated and accurate information (e.g. travel documents).

PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES IN SCHOOLS

16. What precautionary measures should student care centres take, in response to the Novel Coronavirus situation? [UPDATED]

Student care centres should be vigilant in conducting health checks and monitor the health of children and staff.

a. Temperature Screening

- Conduct temperature screening for all children, staff and visitors.
- **[NEW]** With effect from 5 February 2020, preschools are to increase the frequency of temperature taking for children and staff to twice daily (during arrival and **at dismissal**).
- Visitors' records must be properly maintained; and.
- Parents and visitors, who have a fever or display respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, runny nose) should not be allowed to enter the student care centre's premises.

Encourage staff and children to:

b. Observe high levels of personal hygiene

- Cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when sneezing or coughing, and to throw away the tissue immediately into a bin.
- Wash hands frequently with soap, especially before eating or handling food, after toilet visits, or when hands are dirtied by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing.
- Not to share food/drinks, eating utensils, toothbrushes or towels with others.

c. Ensure good environmental hygiene

- Keep the centre environment clean.

- Clean frequently touched surfaces, toys and commonly shared items at least daily and when contaminated by nasal or oral secretions.
- Ensure supplies such as hand soap, tissues, and paper towels are available for children and staff's use.

d. Monitor health and seek medical attention promptly

- Detect and isolate persons who are ill early and advise them to seek medical treatment.
- Advise children and staff who are unwell to stay at home to rest and return to school only when they have fully recovered.
- Remind parents not to send their child to SCC if the child is sick, as infectious diseases can be spread from person to person or through surfaces contaminated by sick individuals.
- Report to MSF and MOH immediately - if there are suspect cases in your student care centre with fever and pneumonia and travel history to China within 14 days before onset of symptoms.

e. Suspend large group activities, and outdoor excursions [NEW]

With effect from 5 Feb 2020, preschools shall suspend:

- Large group and communal activities such as assemblies and mass celebrations
- Excursions and field trips, to minimise exposure of children to large crowds. Daily outdoor play and learning can continue.

f. Travel declaration for visitors [NEW]

Require all visitors entering the Student Care Centre to fill in travel declaration. Ensure that visitors have not visited Mainland China within the last 14 days. Parents/guardians who are the Student Care Centre to pick up and drop off their children for a short period of time (i.e. < 30 minutes) can be excluded.

17. Are student care centre staff required to wear masks when conducting health checks?

[NEW]

There is no need for staff to wear a mask during daily temperature screening and health checks.

Only individuals who are recovering from an illness need to wear a mask. If a staff is unwell, he / she should see a doctor and return to centre only when he / she has fully recovered.

As the Novel Coronavirus situation may extend for a duration of time, student care centres are advised to use your resources such as surgical masks and sanitizers sensibly, and only when necessary.

Extensive use of resources such as masks may also cause unnecessary anxiety among parents and raise expectation that children should be wearing masks daily.