



GOVERNMENT OF THE
VIRGIN ISLANDS

COVID-19



Joint Information Cell • Health Emergency Operations Centre

SCHOOLS REOPENING GUIDANCE



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26th June 2020

SCHOOLS REOPENING GUIDANCE

Public Health Guidance for Schools (K-12) and Childcare Centres (COVID-19)

The Ministry of Health and Social Development continues to monitor national, regional and international reports of COVID-19 disease. This guidance is based on what is currently known about the transmission and severity of the COVID-19 disease. The Environmental Health Division will update this guidance as needed and as additional information becomes available. This document is intended to be territory-wide guidance to help schools and early childhood centers with making informed decisions and to reduce opportunities for transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19 in school and childcare settings.

Schools will refer to both public and private institutions providing Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K to 12) education programmes to children and adolescents in the classroom setting.

Childcare Centres will refer to both licensed and unlicensed childcare programmes providing care and education to children from infants and toddlers to preschool age, as well as providing before and after school care for school age children. Childcare programmes are located in a variety of settings, including family homes, center-based care and schools.

Background:

COVID-19 is an emerging respiratory disease caused by a novel coronavirus that has spread worldwide. COVID-19 is primarily transmitted via respiratory droplets through coughing, sneezing and talking; and touching contaminated surfaces. The signs and symptoms of COVID-19 are very similar to that of other respiratory illness. They include fever, cough, difficulty breathing, and shortness of breath; in severe cases it may cause pneumonia, severe respiratory syndrome, organ failure and even death. As the COVID-19 outbreaks evolve, the Environmental Health Division encourages schools and childcare centres to prepare for possible impact of COVID-19 and take precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19, as well as other infectious diseases, including influenza and gastroenteritis. Creating an emergency plan can help protect you and the health of the individuals at your institution. This guidance, which is organised into four categories, provides recommended actions and strategies for preventing the spread of COVID-19 in school and childcare settings.



26th June 2020

SCHOOLS REOPENING GUIDANCE CONT'D

Recommendations:

When there is no community transmission: The most important thing to do at this point is to plan and prepare. Administrators should reinforce healthy practices among their staff and students. Schools need to be ready if COVID-19 appears in their community. Here are some strategies:

- ✓ **Review, update, and implement an Emergency Operation Plan (EOP).** This should be done in collaboration with local health officials. The plan should include preventative actions for staff and students of how to reduce the spread of infectious disease (e.g. COVID-19). This includes strategies for social distancing, emphasis on respiratory etiquette and handwashing and school dismissal. The plan should also include strategies for information-sharing between schools and local health officials, as well as strategies for continuing education in the event of school dismissal.
- ✓ **Teach and reinforce healthy hygiene practices.** Train staff and cleaners on healthy hygiene practices so that they can teach students. Ensure handwashing practices include washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after using the bathroom, before eating and after blowing nose, coughing or sneezing. If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol. Apply sanitiser to palm of hand, rub vigorously for 20 seconds, and allow to air dry (Do Not Wipe). Additionally, maintain adequate supplies (e.g. soap, paper towel, hand sanitiser, tissue) to support healthy hygiene practices.
- ✓ **Intensify cleaning and disinfecting efforts.** Conduct training for staff and cleaners on how to effectively clean and disinfect. Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched (doorknobs, light switches, sink handles, countertops, desk, etc.). Use all cleaning products according to the directions on the label. A list of EPA-approved products for use against COVID-19 is available at <https://bvi.gov.vg/media-centre/environmental-health-recommends-approved-list-disinfectants>.

The Environmental Health Division has recommended the use of regular household bleach for disinfecting of surfaces. Prepare bleach solution by mixing 1/4 cup of bleach to 1 gallon of water is effective for disinfection. Provide staff with disinfecting wipes to clean commonly touched surfaces (keyboards, controls, mouse, etc.) before use. Additionally, maintain adequate supplies to support cleaning and disinfecting practices. Further guidance on cleaning and disinfecting can be found at bvi.gov.vg.



26th June 2020

SCHOOLS REOPENING GUIDANCE CONT'D

- ✓ **Monitor and plan for absenteeism.** Review attendance and sick leave policy. Encourage staff and students to stay at home when sick, even without documentation from doctors. Use flexibility, when possible, to allow staff to stay home to care for sick family members. Identify critical job functions and positions, and plan for alternative coverage by cross-training staff.
- ✓ **Consider postponing non-critical gathering and events.** Give special consideration to events that might put staff, students and families in close proximity (assemblies, meetings, field trips, workshops, etc.)
- ✓ **Require sick staff and students to stay home. Establish procedures for students and staff who are sick at school.** Establish procedures to ensure staff and students who become sick at school or arrive at school sick are sent home as soon as possible. Identify an area where sick individuals can be isolated until they can leave the school.

When there is minimal to moderate community transmission: If local health officials report that there are multiple cases of COVID-19 in the community, schools may need to implement additional strategies in response to preventing the spread in school, but they should continue using the strategies implemented when there was no community transmission.

- ✓ **Coordinate with local health officials.** Health officials can help a school determine which set of strategies might be most appropriate for their specific situation.
- ✓ **Implement multiple social distancing strategies.** Administrators are encouraged to think creatively about all opportunities to increase physical space between students. Schools should consider modifying classes where students are likely to be in very close contact; increase the space between desk or cribs, avoid mixing students in common areas, and limiting non-essential visitors.

When there is substantial community transmission: Additional strategies, in addition to those implemented when there is no, minimal, or moderate transmission, must be considered when there is substantial transmission in the local community.

- ✓ **Continue to coordinate with local health officials.**
- ✓ **Consider extended school dismissal.** Implement extended school dismissal to slow transmission rate of COVID-19 in the community. Remember to implement strategies to ensure the continuity of education (e.g. distance learning) for students.



26th June 2020

SCHOOLS REOPENING GUIDANCE CONT'D

When a confirmed case has entered the school or childcare centre: When a confirmed case has entered a school, regardless of community transmission, short-term closure procedures will need to be implemented. If this happens, the Environmental Health Division recommends the following procedures:

- ✓ **Coordinate with local health officials.** Once you learn of a COVID-19 case in the school, immediately notify local health officials.
- ✓ **Dismiss students and most staff for 1 week.** During this dismissal, intensify cleaning and disinfection of the surfaces around the school's campus.
- ✓ **Communicate with staff, parents and students.** Keep staff, parents and students informed while maintaining confidentiality of the student or staff member.
- ✓ **Clean and disinfect thoroughly.** Close off areas used by the individual(s) with COVID-19 and wait as long as practical before beginning cleaning and disinfection to minimise potential for exposure to respiratory droplets. Clean and disinfect all areas of the school, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces.
- ✓ **Make decision about extending the school dismissal.** During school dismissal, schools and childcare centres may stay open for staff members while students stay at home. Administrators should seek guidance from local health officials to determine when staff and students should return to schools and what additional steps are needed for the school community.
- ✓ **Implement strategies to continue education.** Implement e-learning plans, including digital and distance learning options that are feasible and appropriate.



26th June 2020

SCHOOLS REOPENING GUIDANCE CONT'D

Environmental Health Division
Ministry of Health and Social Development
Government of the Virgin Islands



1st Floor, Old Administration Building
Main Street
Road Town
Tortola, VG1110

Tel: (284)494-3701 Ext. 5110
Direct Tel: (284) 468-5110
Fax: (284) 468-5109

Objective: To provide institutions with the recommended actions and practices needed to protect the students, teachers and staff from COVID-19.

Table with 4 columns: Action, Requirements, Resources, Time Frame. It contains two rows of guidance for hand-wash stations in schools.



26th June 2020

SCHOOLS REOPENING GUIDANCE CONT'D

<p>3. Provide tissue and no-touch garbage containers in all classrooms and around the institution to encourage proper respiratory hygiene.</p>	<p>Classrooms are supplied with tissue paper and no-touch garbage containers</p> <p>Garbage containers are lined, cleaned and disinfected regularly.</p>	<p>Tissue Paper</p> <p>No- Touch Garbage Container</p> <p>Garbage Liners</p> <p>Cleaning Products and Disinfectants</p>	<p>Before Opening and Ongoing</p>
<p>4. Encourage frequent and thorough hand washing (at-least 20 seconds) and proper respiratory hygiene practices.</p>	<p>Post signs displaying good hand and respiratory hygiene practices</p> <p>Implement hygiene practices within the curriculum</p>	<p>Posters</p> <p>Flyers</p> <p>Video</p> <p>Songs</p> <p>Practical- Demonstrations</p>	<p>Upon Opening and Ongoing</p>
<p>5. Supply all classrooms, halls, canteens, etc., with hand sanitisers.</p>	<p>Install sanitiser dispensers within classrooms, halls, canteens, etc.</p> <p>Maintain sanitiser stock within dispensers</p>	<p>Hand Sanitiser (>60% alcohol)</p> <p>Dispensers</p>	<p>Before Opening ad Ongoing</p>
<p>6. Maintain separation of personal effects</p>	<p>Store personal effects such as bags, blankets, clothing, bottles, etc. in assigned cubicle</p> <p>Label cubicles with students name</p>	<p>Cubicles</p> <p>Labels</p>	<p>Upon Opening and Ongoing</p>
<p><u>Cleaning and Disinfecting</u></p> <p>1. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at-least three times per day or when visibly</p>	<p>Clean and disinfect toys, knobs, handles, light switches, desk, tables, chairs, cots, electronics, diaper changing tables, etc.</p>	<p>Cleaning agents (detergents) Disinfectants (Clorox)</p> <p>Cleaning Schedule</p>	<p>Before Opening and Ongoing</p> <p>Daily</p>

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Page 6

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26th June 2020

SCHOOLS REOPENING GUIDANCE CONT'D

soiled		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to <i>Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Schools and Early Childhood Centers</i> at https://bvi.gov.vg/sites/default/files/cleaning_for_schools_0.pdf 	
2. Clean and disinfect bathroom facilities at least three times per day or when visibly soiled.	Clean and disinfect toilets, handles, countertops, faucets, knobs, etc.	<p>Cleaning agents (detergents)</p> <p>Disinfectants (Clorox)</p> <p>Cleaning Schedule</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to <i>Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Schools and Early Childhood Centers</i> at https://bvi.gov.vg/sites/default/files/cleaning_for_schools_0.pdf 	<p>Before Opening and Ongoing</p> <p>Daily</p>
<u>Social Distancing</u>			
1. Maintain distance amongst teachers, staff and students within classrooms, canteens, bathrooms, etc.	<p>Social Distancing (6 feet) between students, teachers and staff</p> <p>Regulate the amount of students in the classrooms, canteens, bathrooms, etc.</p>	Physical Markers	Before Opening and Ongoing
2. Reduce number of students in outdoor	Monitor and regulate outdoor play		Upon Opening and Ongoing

26th June 2020

SCHOOLS REOPENING GUIDANCE CONT'D

play			
<u>Sick Policy</u>			
1. Encourage sick persons (teachers, staff and students) to stay at home.	Develop Sick Policy Enforce Sick Policy	Sick Policy Document	Upon Opening and Ongoing
2. Isolate sick persons (teachers, staff, and students) who may become ill while at the institution.	Identify isolation room or area Stock Personal Protective Equipment Stock First-Aid Kits Prepare Emergency Contact List COVID-19 HOTLINE: 852-7650	PPE (gloves, masks, etc.) First-Aid Kits Telephone Contact List	Before Opening
<i>Waste Management</i>			
1. Ensure garbage is removed daily and disposed of safely.	Provide garbage container throughout institution. Ensure garbage containers are lined, emptied, cleaned and disinfected regularly.	No-touch garbage containers Garbage liners Cleaning Products & Disinfectants	Before Opening and Ongoing Daily

* Refer to the Public Health Guidance for Schools and Childcare Centres for additional information.

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Page 8

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CLEANING AND DISINFECTING SCHOOLS & EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRES



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26th June 2020

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING SCHOOLS & EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRES

between

This guidance provides recommendations on the cleaning and disinfecting of schools and early childhood centres amidst the recent emergence of the COVID-19 disease. The Ministry of Health and Social Development, Environmental Health Division will update this guidance as needed and as additional information become available. These guidelines are focused on schools (private and public), childcare centres, children homes, after-care programmes, etc.

Background:

COVID-19 is an emerging respiratory disease caused by a novel coronavirus that has spread worldwide. COVID-19 is primarily transmitted via respiratory droplets through coughing, sneezing and talking; and touching contaminated surfaces. The signs and symptoms of COVID-19 are very similar to that of other respiratory illness. They include fever, cough, difficulty breathing, and shortness of breath; in severe cases it may cause pneumonia, severe respiratory syndrome, organ failure and even death. As the COVID-19 outbreak evolves, the Environmental Health Division encourages schools and childhood centres to prepare for possible impact of COVID-19 and take precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Current evidence suggests that COVID-19 may remain viable for hours to days on surfaces made of a variety of materials thus, cleaning and disinfecting is the best practice for prevention. Routine cleaning and disinfection is essential however, **intensification of cleaning and disinfecting is extremely important amidst the recent emergence of COVID-19.**

Cleaning vs. Disinfecting

- **Cleaning** is the removal of visible dirt or particles done on a routine and continual basis. This is typically done using detergent and water.
- **Disinfecting** is the killing or destruction of germs (bacteria, viruses, fungi) on surfaces using physical or chemical means. There must be compliance of contact time when using a chemical disinfectant.



26th June 2020

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING SCHOOLS & EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRES CONT'D

What to Clean and Disinfect

Hand Contact Surfaces - toys, changing tables, desks, knobs, chairs, counters, sinks, cots, toilets, faucets, mattresses, light switched, remotes, etc.

Non-Hand Contact Surfaces – floors, ceilings, etc.

Linens- clothing, sheets, etc.

How to Clean and Disinfect

- Wear disposable gloves when cleaning and disinfecting.
- If surfaces are dirty, they should first be cleaned using a detergent (soap) and water.
- After cleaning, surfaces should be disinfected using a disinfectant.
- For disinfection, regular household solution and/or EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective. Be certain to use suitable disinfectant for appropriate surfaces.
 - o The Environmental Health Division recommends 1/4 cups of bleach to 1 gallon of water.
 - o For EPA-registered household disinfectants refer to <https://bvi.gov.vg/media-centre/environmental-health-recommends-approved-list-disinfectants>.
Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfecting products.
- Do not shake dirty laundry; this minimises the possibility of dispersing the virus through the air.
- Wash items using the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.
- Clean and disinfect hampers for transporting laundry according to the guidance for surfaces above.





26th June 2020

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING SCHOOLS & EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRES CONT'D

When to Clean and Disinfect

The frequency of cleaning and disinfecting is dependent on what is being cleaned and disinfected.

- Hand-Contact Surfaces may need to be cleaned and disinfected weekly, before use by a different child, after each child's use, daily (at least 3 times a day) and/or immediately if visibly soiled.
- Non-hand Contact Surfaces may need to be cleaned and disinfected daily.
- Linens may need to be cleaned weekly, before use by a different child, or immediately if visibly soiled.

Who should clean and disinfect:

Staff should be identified to perform cleaning and disinfecting procedures.

Use of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE):

- Staff should wear disposable gloves when cleaning and handling garbage.
- Gloves should be removed carefully to avoid contamination of the wearer and the surrounding area.
- Immediately after gloves are removed, hands must be washed.



26th June 2020

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING SCHOOLS & EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRES CONT'D

Hand Hygiene:

- Staff must clean hands frequently, including after removing gloves, after contact with an ill person, after using the bathroom, before eating or preparing food, between task and between child, after blowing nose, sneezing or coughing, etc.
- Hands must be washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- If soap and water is not available and hands are not visibly dirty, an alcohol-based hand sanitiser with an alcohol content of at least 60% may be used.



26th June 2020

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING SCHOOLS & EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRES

Environmental Health Division Ministry of Health and Social Development Government of the Virgin Islands



1st Floor, Old Administration Building Main Street Road Town Tortola, VG1110

Tel: (284)494-3701 Ext. 5110 Direct Tel: (284) 468-5110 Fax: (284) 468-5109

Schools (Daycares, Pre-schools & Summer Programs) Inspection Report

Name of School/Programs: _____

Address: _____

Name of Principal/Owner: _____

Contact Number(s): _____

Email: _____

Hours of Operation: _____

No. of Teachers: _____

No. of Children/Students: _____

Age Range: _____

No. of Cleaners: _____

Table with 5 columns: Question, Yes, No, N/A, Comments. Rows include sections for Facility & Equipment, Emergency Management, Policies and Procedures, and Staffing, Care and Supervision.



26th June 2020

**CLEANING AND DISINFECTING SCHOOLS
& EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRES**

	Yes	No	N/A	If No - Specify
b) Is there adequate staff caring for children?				
5. Food Safety				
a) Does staff ensure that children eat healthy meals and snacks?				
b) Is safe drinking water available?				
c) Is there a thermometer in each refrigerator?				
d) Is the refrigerator temperature 41°F or below?				
e) Are hands washed before preparing foods, if applicable?				
f) Are dishes and utensils properly washed, rinsed and sanitized?				
g) Are clean utensils stored properly?				
h) Is there a handwashing sink in food preparation area?				
i) Are soap, running water and paper towel available at hand-wash sink?				
j) Are all food handlers certified through the Environmental Health Division?				
6. Water Supply				
a) Is there adequate supply of hot and cold running water?				
b) Water Source? Cistern or Municipal				Chlorine _____
7. Child Health & Hygiene				
a) Do staff teach children when and how to wash their hands?				
b) Do children have soap to wash their hands?				
c) Is a single-use paper towel used to dry hands?				
d) Does each child have their own cubicle to store all personal effects?				
e) Does each child have their own blankets and sheets?				
f) Does each child have their own crib, cot, mat, desk, etc.?				
g) Are diaper mats in good condition and easy to clean?				
h) Is the diaper mat cleaned and disinfected after each use?				
8. Safety & Sanitation				
a) Sewage Disposal: Public or Septic System				
b) Is solid waste removed daily and disposed of safely?				
c) Are washroom facilities clean, in good repair and provisions supplied?				
d) Are washrooms cleaned at-least three times per day or when visibly soiled?				
e) Is ventilation adequate? Natural or Mechanical or Air Condition				
f) Are windows used for ventilation able to open and equipped with fine mesh screen?				
g) Are floors, walls and ceiling in good repair?				





26th June 2020

**CLEANING AND DISINFECTING SCHOOLS
& EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRES**

	Yes	No	N/A	If No - Specify
h) Is lightning adequate?				
i) Is the building bat proof and insect proof?				
9. Infection Control and Child Health				
a) Are children not admitted when they display signs and symptoms of disease?				
b) Are equipment (cribs, mats, cots, changing tables, desk, tables, etc.) and toys cleaned and disinfected after each use?				
c) Are cribs, cots, mats, desk, tables etc., 6ft apart?				
d) Are linens washed frequently?				
e) Are First Aid kits available, inspected and restocked				
f) Is there a sick bay or isolation area?				
g) Does staff wash their hands between each child?				
10. Personal Hygiene				
a) Hand wash station or hand sanitizer positioned at the entrance of school and classrooms?				
b) Hand-wash station equipped with liquid soap and paper towel?				
c) Hand sanitizer available throughout facility (halls, canteens, classrooms, etc.)?				
d) No-touch garbage containers are available throughout facility (classrooms, canteens halls, etc.)?				
e) High-touch surfaces, tools and equipment (desks, tables, chairs, knobs, etc.) disinfected at-least three times per day?				
f) EHD Approved disinfectant used?				
11. Social Distancing				
a) Physical markers of 6ft placed inside of canteens, classrooms, etc.?				
b) Staff workstations 6 feet apart or adequate social distance?				
c) Appropriate visual aids i.e. posters place in conspicuous locations?				
d) Appropriate shield/barriers installed where required?				
12. PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)				
a) Is face mask/face shield available for staff?				
b) Is face mask/face shield worn properly?				
c) Type of mask used?				
13. License				
a) Valid license to operate?				
b) License posted in an easy-to-view place?				

Name of Inspector (s): _____

Date of Inspection: _____ Time of Inspection: _____