

When must learners and staff be isolated and what requirements does the isolation room have to meet?



MEDICAL SCREENING

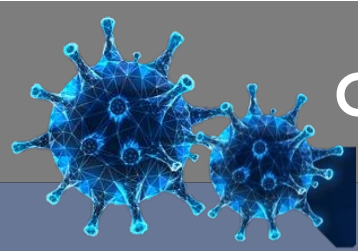
All persons, including learners and staff, must be screened before entering the school premises. This may include questions regarding symptoms, as well as possible contact with persons who have been diagnosed with COVID 19 or who may be infected. The school's safety plan will determine where screening should take place. No person presenting with any COVID 19 symptoms may be allowed onto the school premises. It would, however, be irresponsible to demand that a learner or staff member, who presents with symptoms, must immediately get back into the taxi or bus and return home. The risk of infecting fellow passengers is just too high.

PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES TO BE TAKEN WHEN A LEARNER OR STAFF MEMBER PRESENTS WITH SYMPTOMS

The following precautionary measures must be taken when a learner or staff member appears ill, or presents with COVID 19 symptoms e.g. a dry cough, high fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, sore throat, etc. These procedures apply to screening before and during the school day.

- Isolate the learner or staff member temporarily in a designated isolation room so that any contact with other learners or staff can be avoided until arrangements have been made for him or her to leave the school grounds and to be assessed by a health worker.
- Provide persons in isolation with a FFP1 medical mask.
- Inform the parents/guardian of the situation and request that the learner be collected as soon as possible.
- Contact the school nurse or the nearest health facility, the NICD (National Institute for Communicable Diseases) toll-free hotline number for COVID 19 (0800 029 999) or the relevant provincial officials listed in DBE Circular 1 of 2020 and follow the NDoH protocol for COVID 19. The school will then be advised of any further actions that need to be taken.
- If a person is screened during the school day and presents with symptoms, the same procedures must be followed.





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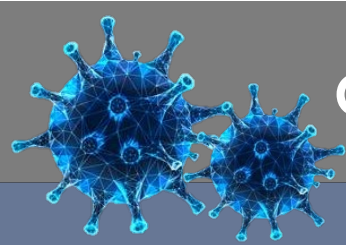


WHAT REQUIREMENTS DOES THE ISOLATION ROOM HAVE TO MEET?

Since no regulations have yet been issued about the requirements for an isolation room at school, the SAOU suggests that you keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Prepare a room that is preferably separate from the classrooms and other buildings that are regularly used.
- The route to the room must be planned such as to avoid any possible contact with other persons.
- A person must be appointed to accompany learners to the room. This person must be provided with the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE).
- The room must have good, natural ventilation, preferably with windows that can be opened or an individual air conditioning unit for the specific room. Air conditioning units are, however, difficult to disinfect properly and the main requirement is to prevent the distribution of microorganisms. Central ventilation systems are not feasible.
- An isolation room should preferably not be shared. If sharing is unavoidable, there should be a distance of at least 1.5 metres between beds.
- When a staff member or cleaner is assigned to an isolation room to do a specific task, that person must be properly trained in all the prescribed COVID 19 safety measures and must be provided with the necessary PPE.
- All furniture in the room must be washable and easily sanitized and disinfected.
- Use a washable mattress protector.
- Replace bed linen and disinfect the room once the person has vacated the room and has been taken home.
- Ventilate well before entering and cleaning the room.
- Use only single beds. Preferably use beds with frames because they are easier to clean than beds with material bases.





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- The regular, safe removal of waste with particular reference to tissues used for coughing and sneezing must be dealt with in terms of COVID 19 regulations. If possible, pedal-operated waste collection bins with liners should be available. Waste should be put in strong plastic rubbish bags and tied when full. The plastic bags should then be placed in a second bin bag and tied. It can then be treated like normal waste. After disposal, correct hand hygiene should be performed. A separate bathroom should be allocated to persons in isolation.
- Both the isolation room and the bathroom should be disinfected regularly with the correct, prescribed detergents.

The guidelines above are also applicable to hostels. It may happen that hostel learners will have to spend more time in isolation because their parents/guardians will not necessarily be available to collect them immediately. In that case you will also have to plan for the safe provision of meals. The school must remember that the “in loco parentis” principle will apply here. In the absence of the parents/guardian, schools will have to consult with parents about dealing with the learner in the interim, with specific reference to testing.

