

13 March 2020

Dear Parents / Guardians

Keeping Our Children in Preschools Safe Against COVID-19

The World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the COVID-19 outbreak as a global pandemic on 11 March 2020, and called upon governments around the world to do more to combat the virus. The Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) will be implementing additional precautionary measures in preschools. These build on a series of precautionary measures that have been progressively implemented in preschools since January 2020.

Updated travel advisory and declarations

2 In light of the rapid spread of the virus across Europe, the Ministry of Health (MOH) advises Singaporeans to **defer all non-essential travel to Italy, France, Spain and Germany**. Singaporeans are also advised to **exercise caution when travelling to all countries affected by COVID-19, especially those who have exported cases (see Annex)**. **This includes travel to our neighbouring countries like Indonesia and the Philippines and those further afield like Japan and the United Kingdom**. The global picture is evolving, and there could be other countries that may be affected. Please note that all travellers will be subject to the prevailing travel measures imposed by their destination countries, and those imposed by Singapore upon their return to Singapore.

3 To protect the health and wellbeing of everyone in preschools, ECDA strongly advises all preschool children and staff to not travel overseas, including to neighbouring countries during this period. If you have made plans to travel during this upcoming March school holidays, we advise you to review your travel plans.

4 We have requested preschools to obtain updated travel declarations for preschool staff and children and to monitor travel plans. Thus, we seek your cooperation to inform the preschool if you intend to travel or wish to change your travel plans.

Extension of Stay-Home Notice to those with travel history to Italy, France, Spain and Germany and other symptomatic travellers

5 MOH has **extended the Stay-Home Notice (SHN) to those with travel history to Italy, France, Spain and Germany and other symptomatic travellers.** The SHN will apply to the following groups:

- a. With effect from 15 March 2020, 11.59pm: Singapore residents (Singaporean Citizens and Permanent Residents), Long-term pass holders (Student's Pass, Dependant's Pass, and Long-term Visit Pass) and foreign employees issued with a work pass¹ with recent travel history to (i) Mainland China (outside of Hubei²); (ii) France; (iii) Germany; (iv) Iran; (v) Italy; (vi) the Republic of Korea; and (vii) Spain within the last 14 days; and
- b. With immediate effect: Travellers entering Singapore and exhibiting fever and/or other symptoms of respiratory illness are required to undergo a COVID-19 swab test at the checkpoints and will be issued a SHN, regardless of travel history.

6 Persons under the SHN will have to remain in their place of residence at all times during the 14-day period. Those placed on the SHN will be required to monitor their health closely and avoid contact with others. They should seek medical attention promptly if they feel unwell.

Social distancing measures

7 To reduce the risk of local transmission, preschools are encouraged to limit large group activities and gatherings where possible. Preschools have been advised to:

- a. Suspend large group and communal activities such as assemblies and mass celebrations. Measures that preschools can take include the following:
 - Children to proceed directly to classrooms when they arrive in school, where possible
 - Programmes and activities to be carried out in small groups
 - Children to have their meals in their classrooms or to stagger meal times
- b. Encourage parents to drop off and pick up their children outside the centre. Parents are encouraged to stand further apart from one another while waiting to pick up their children outside the preschool.
- c. Suspend excursions and field trips to minimise risk of exposing children to large crowds. Daily outdoor play and learning will continue.

¹ Work pass here refers to Work Permit, S Pass, Employment Pass, Personalised Employment Pass, EntrePass, Work Holiday Pass, Letter of Consent or In-Principle Approval.

² Travellers from Hubei province shall be subject to quarantine.

8 We encourage all children, parents/guardians and preschool staff to practise good personal hygiene. This includes washing their hands frequently with soap, wearing a surgical mask if they have a cough or runny nose to prevent infecting others, and seeing a doctor if they are sick and returning to school only when fully recovered.

9 ECDA and the relevant agencies are monitoring the COVID-19 situation closely. Let's continue to work together to keep ourselves and the preschools safe and healthy.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Alexander', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Bernadette Alexander (Ms)
Director (Regulation and Standards)
Early Childhood Development Agency

COUNTRIES/REGIONS WITH KNOWN AND POTENTIAL EXPORTED CASES

- Mainland China
- Egypt
- France
- Germany
- Hong Kong
- India
- Italy
- Indonesia
- Iran
- Israel
- Japan
- Malaysia
- Philippines
- Republic of Korea
- Spain
- Thailand
- United Kingdom
- United States

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