Back to school during COVID-19

Complete Awareness Guide for Parents
Dear Parents,
The world is experiencing unprecedented challenges from COVID-19. In the UAE, we have taken all necessary steps to tackle the situation and we have prioritized community health and safety.
The government has decided to reopen schools on the condition that they adopt stringent precautionary measures and make all necessary amendments to reduce the possibility of transmission of infection among students and to provide a safe and healthy educational environment. Parents play a pivotal role in helping us maintain health and safety standards.
Students and parents must adopt internationally recommended safety measures at school and after school as well.
Kindly ensure that all health and safety measures communicated by your school are followed at ALL times to help provide a safe and healthy environment for school children.
It is natural for your child to feel confused and experience many feelings such as fear and hesitation to return to school.

Here are some tips to encourage your children to return to school:

- Encourage your child to have a conversation with you and talk about what is upsetting him and making him feel anxious about returning to school.
- Educate children about COVID-19, how it is transmitted and ways to protect themselves from it.
- Inform them about the safety measures and precautions that the school will follow and explain to them that these measures are in place for everyone’s safety, health and wellbeing.
- Talk to them about the changes they will experience in school, such as having to wear a mask and the importance of maintaining physical distance between them and everyone at all times.
- Empower them by making them understand that they are helping keep the school environment healthy and they are protecting themselves and their peers by adopting these precautionary measures.
Here are some tips to encourage your children to return to school:

- Talk to them frequently so that you can notice if they are experiencing any change in their behaviour.
- Reach out and seek professional help if you or your child is experiencing persistent behavioral changes or symptoms due to the current situation.
Back-to-school preparations:

1. Prepare your child mentally

- Be supportive and listen to your child
- Address any concerns and worries they may have
- Speak to your child about going back to school

- Explain to your child that COVID-19 is not a stigma, so it is important to respect the feelings of those who have the disease
- Emphasize the positives of returning to school
- Speak to your child about feeling safe within the school environment
Substitute sodas and sugary drinks with water.
Ensure sufficient intake of fruits and vegetables.
Establish a routine before school starts.
Ensure that your child is up-to-date with the required vaccinations.
Set a strict bedtime for them depending on their age group.
Do not allow any screen time two hours before their bedtime so that they get a restful sleep.

Back-to-school preparations:

Immunity plays a critical role in protecting against COVID-19.
Your child's weapons to fight COVID-19:

1. **Knowledge:** Educate your child about COVID-19
   - Symptoms
   - Methods of transmission
   - Ways in which your child can protect himself and others

2. **Tools:** Provide a safety kit for your child to take to school
   - Hand sanitizers
   - Face Masks
   - Tissues

3. **Practices**
   - Teach children the correct way to wash their hands
   - Maintain sufficient physical distance (not less than 2 meters)
   - Sneeze / cough etiquette
Everyone has an immune system

The immune system acts as the body’s defense mechanism

It defends your body from dangerous viruses or harmful germs

We MUST all take steps to protect ourselves and make our immune system stronger to fight COVID-19

To fight COVID-19, we all need a strong immune system

Everyone should be careful because even if you are young and healthy, you can still catch the virus and spread it to others.

Immunity and COVID-19

Immunity:

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We MUST all take steps to protect ourselves and make our immune system stronger to fight COVID-19
Ways to boost immunity:

• Make sure you get enough sleep
• Stay active and exercise regularly
• Avoid feeling angry or stressed
• Eat balanced meals
• Eat enough fruits and vegetables

Please be aware that your immune system will not protect you from COVID-19 unless you adhere to preventive measures (physical distancing, washing your hands and wearing a mask).
A child’s immune system is a defense mechanism against infectious diseases. To function efficiently, the immune system needs to be supported with a healthy and balanced diet.

Your child’s diet should contain the following elements:

- **Nuts and seeds:** They contain the amino acid arginine and it is importance in supporting immune cells. (Kindly note that some children are allergic to nuts, so don’t send nuts to school and follow your child’s school nutrition policy)

- **Carrots and sweet potatoes:** Because they contain vitamin A, which boosts the immune response

- **Foods rich in Vitamin C:** Such as oranges, kiwis, papayas, strawberries, bell peppers and broccoli. These foods help protect against infections.

- **Meat and seafood such as shrimps:** As they are rich in Zinc, a mineral that is known to boost the immune response
A child’s immune system is a defense mechanism against infectious diseases. To function efficiently, the immune system needs to be supported with a healthy and balanced diet.

Your child’s diet should contain the following elements:

- **Dairy products** because they contain probiotics which help control infections and protect against harmful bacteria.
- **Whole grains** as they contain selenium which boosts the immune response.
- **Vitamin E rich foods** such as avocados and vegetable oils (consume in moderation). Vitamin E is a powerful antioxidant.
Sanitization of personal items at school:

1. Children should avoid exchanging their personal items with their classmates. Ensure that you sanitize their personal items regularly.

2. The personal items most susceptible to contamination are:

- Pen and notebook
- Headphones
- Lunch box
- School bag
You can sanitize them with a disinfectant or a sanitizer provided it contains a minimum alcohol content of 60 per cent.
What is the COVID-19 virus?
It is not a new virus, it is only a new strain from a well-known family of viruses called Corona and it is found in respiratory fluids such as saliva and mucus.

How can I get it?
The virus is transmitted through contaminated droplets resulting from coughing, sneezing and touching surfaces contaminated with this droplet.

What are the symptoms of the disease?
The symptoms are similar to those of the common cold and flu such as fever, dry cough, sore throat and difficulty breathing. Symptoms can also include loss of smell and appetite.

Do symptoms appear as soon as the virus enters the body?
No. Normally symptoms may appear after a period of one to 14 days after the virus enters the body.
What your child should know

• How can I protect my family and myself from the virus?
  o Wash hands frequently for at least 20 seconds
  o Wear a mask
  o Follow the sneezing and coughing etiquette
  o Maintain physical distance
  o Avoid touching the nose, mouth and eyes with contaminated hands.

• What practices make me more vulnerable to contracting the virus?
  Neglecting to comply with all the precautionary measures
Tips for students:

- Inform an adult if you notice you have fever or ANY respiratory symptom.
- Talk to an adult if you feel stress or anxious about returning to school.
- Plan ahead: For example, set up a daily schedule for study / homework.
- To boost your immunity:
  - Get enough sleep
  - Exercise
  - Drink lots of water and follow a healthy diet

Focus on doing well in school and seeing your classmates.
Don't worry, just follow all necessary safety precautions.
Ensuring your safety and wellbeing when traveling to and from school:

Before going out

- Wear a mask before leaving the house
- It is better to tie your hair to reduce touching your face
- Do NOT go to school if you have ANY symptoms of a respiratory infection or fever
- It is better to use private transportation
- Don't forget to carry your protective kit
Ensuring your safety and wellbeing when traveling to and from school:

**When entering the house**

- When you return from school, take off your shoes, keep them in a specific place, preferably outside your home and do not forget to sanitize them later.
- Take off your school clothes and put them in a laundry bag.
- Remove your face mask and dispose it correctly.
- Shower or wash the exposed areas of your body well (hands, wrists, neck and feet).
- Leave your school bag, personal items and study tools in a designated place in the hallway of your home and sanitize it later.
- Now you can safely spend time with your family.
Ensuring your safety and wellbeing when traveling to and from school:

Tips for students that use the school bus

- Do not enter the bus if you have any respiratory symptoms.
- Wear a mask before entering the bus and follow precautionary measures required.
- Maintain physical distancing between yourself and others and avoid gathering with friends.
- Note that your temperature will be measured before entering the bus.
Avoid touching the interior surfaces of the bus

Do not touch your face with contaminated hands and keep your hands clean by sanitizing them frequently
It is normal to feel stress and anxious about COVID-19, however, it is important to remember that the best way to protect yourself and others is to follow all the precautionary measures and instructions.

- Accept the new changes and abide by them, everyone is now responsible
- You must inform your teacher if you have any symptoms
- You must bring your own protective kit (hand sanitizer, spare masks and tissue paper)
- Maintain a physical distance between you and others (2 meters) at all times
Tips for students in the classroom

It is normal to feel stress and anxious about COVID-19, however, it is important to remember that the best way to protect yourself and others is to follow all the precautionary measures and instructions.

- Stick to your place in the classroom
- Avoid sharing your tools (such as pens, notebooks and personal items) with your classmates
- It is important not to panic or spread rumors, which negatively affects the school environment
How to safely communicate with classmates and teachers:

- Follow no-contact greetings; this means no handshake and no high-fives either.
- Avoid gatherings
- Refrain from whispering and exchanging notes
- Maintain physical distancing between yourself and others at all times
Protect yourself and your classmates.
The respiratory droplets from sneezing and coughing transmit COVID-19. To protect yourself from infection, you must adhere to the following preventive measures:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing or use the inside of your elbow.
- Immediately throw the used tissue in the waste bin.
- Do not use your hands to cover your mouth.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
Hand Washing Technique:

1. Apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces
2. Rub hands palm to palm
3. Rub right palm over left dorsum with interlaced fingers and vice versa
4. Rub palm to palm with fingers interlaced
5. Rub back of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked
6. Rotational rubbing of left thumb clasped in right palm and vice versa
7. Rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa
8. Rinse hands with water
9. Dry hands thoroughly with a single use towel
10. Use towel to turn off faucet
11. Your hands are now safe
Physical distancing

COVID-19 is transmitted by contaminated droplets, so it is important to maintain a sufficient distance between you and others at all times.

- The distance should not be less than two meters.
- You may think that it is difficult to maintain this distance in the school environment, especially with your classmates but remember that physical distancing is one of the most basic elements in protecting you, your classmates and your family.
Before wearing a face mask

Wash your hands before touching the face mask

Ensure that there are no holes or tears in the face mask

Make sure the colored side is facing outwards

Find the top side where the metal piece is and place the metal piece on your nose and squeeze it
When wearing a face mask

Pull the face mask from the bottom to cover the mouth and chin

Adjust the face mask to cover your face, leaving no gaps on the sides

Avoid touching the face mask once you wear it
After using the face mask

The face mask should be removed from behind the ears or the head without touching the front side.

Dispose of the mask immediately after you finish using it and put it in the waste bin.

Wash your hands or sanitize them after disposing of the face mask.
Practices you must avoid when wearing a face mask

- Using a mask that is torn or wet
- Sharing your mask with classmates or using someone else’s mask
- Touching the front side of the mask
- Removing the mask to speak with your classmates
- Placing the mask on exposed surfaces while eating
- Leaving the used mask within the reach of others
- Using a cloth mask without washing it
- Throwing the mask on the ground

- Wearing the mask in an incorrect manner, this includes:
  - Under the nose
  - Leaving the chin uncovered
  - Placing the mask around the neck
  - Wearing a face mask that doesn’t fit
### Do and don’ts at school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do</th>
<th>Don’t</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Greet others from afar</td>
<td>• Handshake and no high-fives either</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Wash or sanitize your hands frequently</td>
<td>• Share food with others</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Wear your mask the entire time you are at school</td>
<td>• Sit with a big group of friends</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Maintain physical distancing</td>
<td>• Touch your eyes, nose or mouth with dirty hands</td>
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<td>• Bring your own food from home</td>
<td>• Throw your mask in undesignated places</td>
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<td>• Stay home if you have ANY respiratory symptoms</td>
<td>• Exchange books and stationary</td>
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<td>• Clean and disinfect your desk</td>
<td>• Spread rumors about COVID-19</td>
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<td>• Bully those who get the virus</td>
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<td>• Share your mask with your classmates</td>
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Know that by following safety instructions, you are not only protecting your health and the health of your family but also keeping your classmates, teachers and staff at the school healthy.

Parents can contact our toll-free number 800588 for more information related to COVID-19.

Scan the code to download the Back to school guide.