



Standard Operating Procedures for the duration of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Version 04 FOR PARENTS
OCTOBER 2021

PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT

This Standard Operating Procedure Manual (SOP) provides guidelines for all the school community and the steps that must be taken to prevent the spread and the management of cases of COVID-19 within De La Salle College (DLS), Junior School in full conformity with the guidelines issued by the MEDE, SfCE and Malta Health Authorities.

TARGET AUDIENCE

This SOP applies to:

- a) All the school community, including members of teaching and ancillary staff
- b) Students
- c) Parents/Guardians
- d) Visitors
- e) Any other partner or third party who provides a service at school

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES FOR THE PREVENTION OF THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

Schools play an important role in the efforts to control the spread of COVID-19. DLS Junior School will circulate information about the disease and its potential transmission within the community.

The school will also encourage good practice every day.

De La Salle College Junior School supports the national efforts to fight the spread of COVID-19. This can only be achieved through diligent adherence to this SOP and meticulous monitoring to ensure that the directives are being adhered to.

Hygiene remains the most powerful weapon against Covid-19. The school community will be reminded on a regular basis of:

- a. The importance of hand hygiene
- b. Avoidance of touching of the face and eyes
- c. Correct cough and sneeze etiquette
- d. The correct sanitization of equipment and work surfaces
- e. The correct disposal of tissues/ hand towels/ wipes/ face masks/ gloves, etc.
- f. Social distancing and the practice of operating in a 'bubble'
- g. Social responsibility is also of paramount importance. Everyone must be reminded of the importance of:
 - i. Staying at home when sick.
 - ii. Acting rationally, responsibly and in accordance with advice/ instructions issued by the Health Authorities.
 - iii. Supporting any member of the school community who has been affected by the pandemic.
 - iv. Keeping at bay any sort of stigma associated with Covid-19.

STEPS TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 AT DE LA SALLE – JUNIOR SCHOOL

Employees who show symptoms associated with COVID–19 are advised not to come to work.

Parents are to take their children's temperature in the morning before attending school, as well as their own if they are dropping off / picking up their children at school. If there are signs of illness, the children must be kept at home. A medical certificate needs to be emailed to the teacher to cover even 1 day of absence from school. The medical certificate should clearly show the name and contact details of the doctor and the *fit for school* date.

As from this year, the concept of 'announced absence' is being introduced. This can be resorted to if the parents inform the school in advance about the child's absence. The absence can be of a whole day/ part of the day. Examples when these announced absences can be resorted to are: medical related appointments, funerals or other special occasions.

The HOS, Level Asst. head in charge and the class teacher needs to be informed of such absences at least 2 days in advance.

If a member of your household is awaiting a SWAB result, students of De La Salle within that household should not be sent to school.

Daily checklist for parents and members of staff

Please check daily for these symptoms:

- a) A temperature of 37.2°C or above
- b) Sore Throat
- c) New uncontrolled cough (for students with a chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from what is their usual)
- d) Diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain
- e) New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever

Obligations of the school community

All members of the school communities shall:

- a) Follow the directives issued by the school administration
- b) Avoid mass gatherings
- c) Maintain a social distance of at least 1.5 to 2 metres with others, where possible
- d) Stick to the designated cluster and assigned facilities/ corridors/ areas
- e) Wear a mask/visor or in specific cases, both
- f) Avoid direct contact with others eg. shaking hands or hugging
- g) Clean your hands frequently with water and soap / hand sanitizer
- h) Inform the education authorities immediately if a learner, educator, support staff or parent/caregiver has been in direct contact with an infected person, or if they are diagnosed with COVID-19
- i) Eradicate all forms of stigma and discrimination as a result of COVID-19

Furthermore,

- j) Personal sanitizing products (clean masks, a container for the masks, a packet of wipes and a small bottle of sanitizer) for students are to be supplied by parents/guardians and are to be brought to school daily.
- k) Extra bottles of sanitizer will be available in the classrooms and common areas.
- l) Non-essential belongings, apart from communication devices, toys or educational material which are specifically designed to stimulate children with disabilities, are strongly discouraged.

Roles and responsibilities of the Head of School

- a) Ensuring that students and employees are informed, trained and instructed about the correct and necessary safety measures and procedures.
- b) Ensuring adherence to the guidelines issued by the Health Authorities.
- c) Acting as Liaison Officer with the Health Authorities.

Roles and responsibilities of the School Leadership Team (SLT) and staff

SLT and staff members shall:

- a) Stay informed about COVID-19 through reputable sources and share this information with all stakeholders.
- b) Display signs or posters encouraging good hand and respiratory hygiene practices.
- c) Ensure the provision of 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizers in each classroom and in common areas around the school.
- d) Ensure that cleaning staff clean and disinfect school buildings thoroughly and regularly.
- e) Ensure that all classrooms are equipped with appropriate bins and that trash is removed ~~by~~ and disposed of safely.
- f) Ensure that the school precincts office procures sufficient quantities of hand sanitizers, soap and disposable drying material for all classrooms, toilets, offices and staffrooms.

Access control for parents and third parties

Entry by visitors, including parents is allowed only if approved by the HOS or his delegate.

This procedure is to be followed by all visitors:

- a) Inform the SLT or the Secretary.
- b) The Secretary shall inform the gatekeeper who will update the appointment book.
- c) Anybody arriving at school who does not feature in the gatekeeper's register for the day, will not be admitted unless clearance is obtained from the SLT.
- d) All visitors must wear a face mask/ visor before approaching the gate.
- e) The visitor's temperature shall be taken by the gatekeeper, and hand sanitizer applied.
- f) The gatekeeper will register the visitor's personal details (including full name, ID card number, mobile phone number and time of arrival).
- g) The visitor will be issued with an official pass which has to remain visible throughout the whole visit.
- h) The visitor will report to the main reception and the receptionist will inform the Junior School of the arrival of the visitor.
- i) If the visitor is picking up a sick student, the gatekeeper will inform the Head of School at once and follow specific instructions.
- j) On departure, the visitor will sign out with the gatekeeper and return the pass.

MANAGEMENT OF COVID-19 CASES AT SCHOOL

Individuals at risk

Extra precautions shall be taken in relation to:

- a) students and staff with pre-existing medical conditions and chronic conditions
- b) staff over the age of 65 years.
- c) Pregnant members of staff

In the case of individuals falling in the above categories, they need to speak to the Head of School to discuss the situation on an individual basis.

Action to be taken when a student appears ill or displays symptoms associated with COVID-19

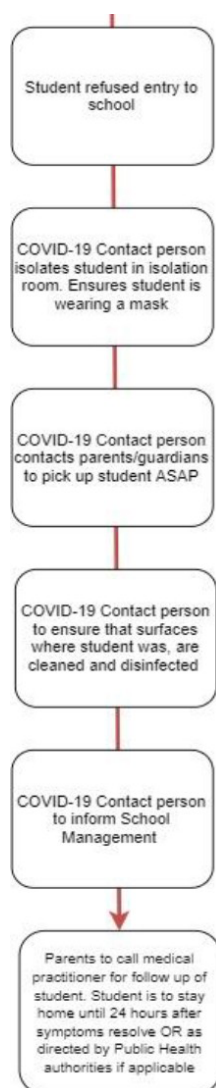
Procedure in the case of illness:

- a) Ensure that the student is wearing a mask.
- b) If the need arises, the child will be taken to the isolation room to await pick up by parents.
- c) If the child can handle it, he will be asked to pack his belongings and carry the bag with him to the isolation room. If the child is not in a position to do this, a member of staff will pack the child's belongings after wearing the appropriate PPE.
- d) The child's seat and table are thoroughly sanitized.

- e) The parents will pick up the child as quickly as possible.

Health Procedures:

Student with fever or other symptoms on entering school



Student with fever or other symptoms at school



Management and monitoring of absenteeism

School administrators must manage and monitor absenteeism by:

- a) Reviewing attendance and sick leave closely and regularly.
- b) Determining what level of absenteeism will disrupt continuity of teaching and learning, and make the necessary plans to mitigate this. Replacements will be dealt with depending on the situation at hand.
- c) Liaising with the Director if, due to staff absenteeism, the school is unable to operate, so that a decision is taken whether the children will be asked not to attend.

New procedures: Basic Classroom Management

Preparation of the Classrooms and the Storage of teaching Material

- a) Teachers should aim at reducing clutter and the amount of surfaces where germs can proliferate.
- b) Teachers shall avoid the use of soft furnishings and any surface which cannot be wiped clean.
- c) Class libraries are to be packed away and labelled.
- d) If money needs to be collected a special tin / tray is used and left untouched for 48 hours – no change is given and online payment is encouraged if made available by the school.

Classroom Plan

- a) The furniture/ workspace will be organized according to the directions given by the DLS Junior School SLT.
- b) A seating plan will be given the Covid Liaison Officer before the commencement of school.

Classroom management policy

- a) Group work can only be done in open air spaces within the same bubble.
- b) The teacher will avoid changing the places of students in the classroom.
- c) Sharing of equipment and personal property is strictly forbidden.
- d) Students will only bring items as stipulated by the teacher.
- e) Teachers must stick to the designated timetable especially with regards to textbooks in order to preclude use of the lockers and avoid heavy schoolbags.
- f) Art kits are not to be brought to school during the pandemic- instead only the necessary items are to be brought on the day.
- g) Play dough is not to be used in school during the pandemic.
- h) Teachers will keep trips out of the classroom to an absolute minimum and only when strictly necessary.
- i) Doors and windows should be left open for ventilation whenever possible.
- j) Only one student at a time will be sent out on a toilet break.
- k) Where possible, teachers are encouraged to operate on a system of class correction to mark the students' work.

- l) HW will be corrected by the teacher. Specific actions will be taken by the teacher to ensure that enough time elapses before the copy book/script is handled.
- m) Effort will be made to take assessment exercises online. However, if the teacher is going to collect hardcopies of assignments, the work is to be allowed to rest in a designated space (ideally out of reach of children) for a minimum of 24 hours before it is handled.

Children on medication

Children on daily medication are to be escorted by an adult to the nurse's room at the prescribed time.

Toilet and Movement Breaks

Toilets

- a) Use of toilets will be staggered.
- b) Each class will be assigned a toilet cubicle. Children will refrain from using toilet cubicles which have not been assigned to them.
- c) Hand sanitizer must be applied before and after exiting/entering class to use the toilet.
- d) Hands will be washed and dried carefully after each toilet use.
- e) Staff and students will follow the signage when walking along corridors.

Recreation time

- a) The movement break will be kept short so clusters can be kept at some distance apart.
- b) The children will not take anything out with them during break and masks will be worn throughout the whole duration of the break.
- c) The supervisor will make sure that there is adequate space between each class group proceeding out for break. The children and members of staff will follow the directions marked on the floor for entry/ exit into the school/play areas.
- d) The reverse procedure will be used for re-entry to class. Supervisors will call out the class one by one and return in an orderly manner.

Supervision duties

- a) Supervisors will wear masks/visors during their duty.
- b) Supervisors will make sure that children from particular clusters do not mix with students from other clusters.
- c) No one will be allowed to go back into the school building during breaktime.
- d) Use of the toilets will not be allowed during break time.
- e) Periodically the supervisor will remind the students of the importance of personal space and keeping an adequate social distance.

Use of School Grounds

- a) Children will be confined to spaces which have been authorized for their use.

- b) *Ad hoc* decisions regarding the use of areas other than the designated ones for lessons, activities etc. are prohibited.
- c) Teachers and students will avoid roaming around the corridors/ the school unless strictly necessary.

Attendance Records

- a) Attendance will be taken as instructed punctually by 8.30am. This record will be of vital importance when the Health Authorities need to initiate contact tracing.
- b) When the class teacher is absent, the attendance will be taken by the LSE.
- c) Attendance records need to be updated regularly when children arrive late or leave early.
- d) An online medical certificate is required for each day that a child is away from school. The teacher will check the date of return.

Outings and Excursions

Outings and other forms of extra-curricular activities held outside the school's confines will resume within the same class bubble and as long as these are strictly educational and kept to an absolute minimum.

Extra-curricular activities

Extra-curricular activities such as assemblies, performances for a large audience choir rehearsals, other such gatherings are suspended for the duration of the emergency.

Level assemblies will be organized once a term straight after break respecting the bubbles and having a minimum of 2.5m between one class and another.

The library service will resume as from November 2021. The number of students who will be allowed in the library will be very limited.

Food Handling Considerations

General Policy

The following rules will apply to all the school community:

- a) All snacks and food consumed at school will be brought in ready to eat from home.
- b) No nuts and food items like Nutella that include nuts are to be brought to school.
- c) Distribution and sharing of birthday treats, will resume as long as these treats are individually packed. This applies to staff and students.
- d) Staff members will use their own mugs/ cups for the consumption of beverages and be responsible for their washing and safe storage.
- e) Any cups/ receptacles/ mugs etc found in the sink or elsewhere will be thrown away immediately.
- f) No electric kettles or other similar appliances can be used in the classrooms.

Lunch Consumption

- a) Children will eat and drink in class ONLY.
- b) All lunch boxes, bottles etc. will remain in the children's satchels until break time.
- c) Children will wipe down their desk and sanitize their hands before and after consuming their lunches.

Teaching and Learning Considerations

Mass

Two classes at a time (Year 3 – 6) will go to the chapel for Mass. The other two classes will stay with their class teacher in class for a Religion lesson..

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Morning Arrivals

- a) Staff are to enter the school building via the Junior School Entrance (opposite Gym), have their temperature taken and sanitize their hands. They will proceed to sign in using their own biros on a table outside Mr. Mifsud's office.
- b) Students dropped off at the gate will proceed to the Junior School Entrance along the designated path.
- c) Students alighting from buses will also proceed to the Junior School Entrance.
- d) At the Junior School Entrance designated Staff will help students form a queue and keep social distancing.
- e) No Senior or Sixth Form students or staff are to be allowed in but have to proceed to their respective entrances.
- f) The temperature of each student and staff member will be taken by designated staff.
- g) If anyone registers a temperature of 37.2°C or above, s/he will be asked to wait for some time.
- h) The reading will be taken again after one minute.
- i) If the temperature fails to go down, the procedure as delineated in section 5 of this document will be set in motion.
- j) On passing through the checkpoint, staff and student will apply hand sanitizer and proceed to class.

Afternoon Dismissal

- a) On arrival in the morning, the students using school transport will remain in class.
- b) On dismissal in the afternoon, the Year 2 students may have a different designated area. All students will exit through the Junior School Entrance to board the buses
- c) Students who leave with their parents, will be picked up at the front gate: Dismissal will be staggered as advised by the class teacher.
- d) Parents will be asked to be punctual and queue properly at the school gates. Parents are asked to wear masks/ visors and maintain social distance outside the gates.
- e) If any student is not picked up by 2.00 pm they will be looked after at the gate by a designated member of staff who is on dismissal duty.

Pick-up / drop-off of students during school hours

When parents are asked to pick up their sick son, they will contact the Head of School on arrival at the school gates.

In other circumstances students are not allowed to leave school during school hours unless permission is granted beforehand by the Head of School. Any such movement is strongly discouraged, as is dropping of students after lessons have begun.

On-Line Teaching

- a) If some students remain home due to quarantine or if they are awaiting a swab result, the school will endeavor to support their education.
- b) If the Health Authorities shut down schools, DLS Junior School will go on-line. The teachers will follow the SLT's directions for going online.

Going On-Line

The salient points of the strategy, should we need to go online are outlined below:

- a) MS TEAMS will be the main platform through which the material is presented to the students.
- b) In the case of live online sessions, students will be asked to switch on the cameras.
- c) Clear guidelines will be distributed both to parents and students regarding proper behaviour and preparation needed for live online sessions.
- d) Additional processes are being considered to be added to the current ones:
 - i. Attendance will be taken for every online session delivered.
 - ii. All class teachers and subject teachers will assign MS TEAMS Assignments.
 - iii. Assessment will be recorded for a number of assignments and used to compile a report..
 - iv. Online timetables will be assigned for every year level.
 - v. Implementation of Class Notebook as a means of assigning homework to our students is being encouraged.

Support to the School Community

Technical and resource support has been an important factor in the implementation of the online learning strategy way back in March.

We acknowledge and we are grateful for the fact that many teachers and LSEs supported parents themselves thus reducing the support requests.

It is the intention of the SLT that if there is a need to go online again, additional support request channels will be set up for both teachers and parents.

A special team will be created to offer support and training to parents and students alike.

Teachers will have special channels for support requests, training requests and training on the newly created JS-TEAM (formerly referred to as eBoard).

